

WORLD NEWS THE EURO

PLEASANT SURPRISE ALL THE SYSTEMS THAT MIGHT HAVE GONE WRONG DIDN'T, THOUGH DUAL-DENOMINATION MAY YET PRESENT PROBLEMS

A smooth birth, all the family seem happy

By Wolfgang Münchau in Frankfurt
After years of dire warnings it came as a pleasant surprise that the birth of Europe's single currency this week proceeded as smoothly as one could have hoped for.

gains, but it was a nice touch anyway. Even the stock markets surged - albeit for different reasons. A beggar in downtown Frankfurt marked the occasion by holding up a sign saying that he, too, would now accept euros, unlike many of the city's department stores, whose cashiers seemed lost for words when customers insisted on paying in the unfamiliar new unit.

2002, when euro banknotes and coins are being introduced. Legally, a distinction between the euro and national money is meaningless because national notes and coins are nothing other than an odd denomination of the euro anyway.

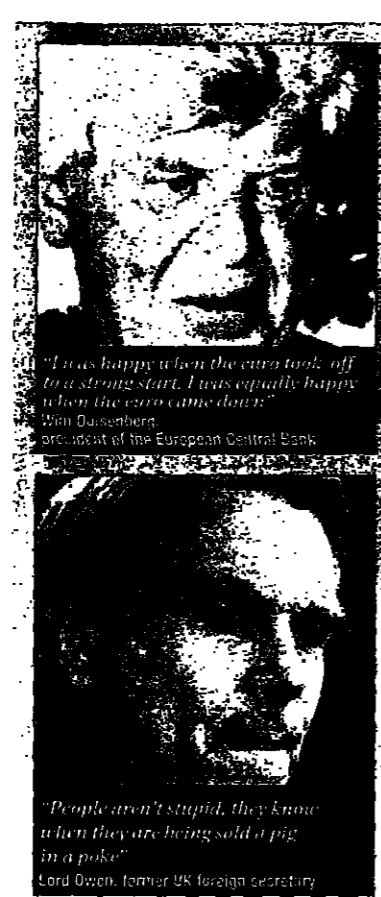
Share prices and dividends, too, have been re-denominated into euros - which has led to some initial confusion. And, of course, there are also many fewer millionaires left in the 11 euro-zone countries if wealth is measured in euros.

George Grabam, Banking Editor, adds: International clearing banks and foreign exchange dealers have put pressure on a handful of banks to change practices which have resulted in a large number of interbank payments ending up at the wrong address. After a series

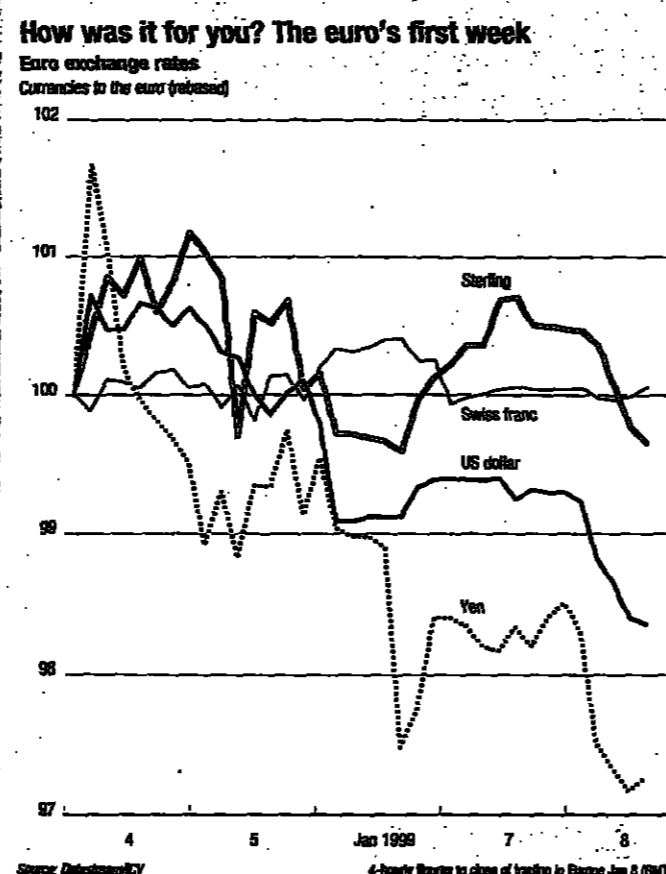
of meetings this week in London new guidelines were broadcast to banks last night on the Swift interbank electronic message network. After the launch of the euro this week, half a dozen large banks were handling payment instructions in a way that did not comply with the guidelines.

Markets give new currency a fright

By Alan Beattie in London
The euro suffered its first scare late yesterday when it dropped by more than a cent against the dollar to its lowest level since it was launched on Monday.



It was happy when the euro took off from 1999. It was equally happy when the euro came down. Wim Duisenberg, president of the European Central Bank.



It's good for Europe, that's good for the US. Robert Rubin, US treasury secretary.

Distribution of cash seen as a big headache

By Emma Tucker in Brussels
Now that 11 European currencies have been locked together to form the euro, many are impatient to set eyes on and handle Europe's single currency.

shops and even the public. This, they argue, will lead to a smoother transition by allowing a fast replacement of old currencies by the new from day one.

Organised crime licks its lips over forgeries

By John Mason in London
When the European single currency project reaches the day in 2002 when you can put a euro in your pocket, criminals can be expected to make full use of the new opportunities this will give them, security experts warn.

He warned the European Union's institutional framework for fighting forgers was "far from... satisfactory". Although the euro would circulate freely inside and outside the euro-zone, legislation and law enforcement agencies were nationally based.

as the real thing, he said. If the threat from counterfeiting is clear, the issue of money-laundering is more complex. Rudi Ort, chairman of the European Bankers' Federation fraud working group, believed the euro would present no new opportunities.

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VOTE ON CURRENCY WAIT AND SEE APPROACH MAY END NEXT YEAR ENTRY MOMENTUM GROWS IN DENMARK

Sweden may bring forward referendum

By Tim Burt in Stockholm and Clara McCarthy in Copenhagen
Göran Persson, Swedish prime minister, has given the firmest signal so far that Sweden could hold a referendum on participation in European economic and monetary union next year.

UK and Denmark, has abstained from the first round of monetary union - arguing that the project commanded insufficient public support.

In Copenhagen yesterday Ib Christensen, president of the confederation of Danish industry, renewed his support for an early referendum on Emu participation.

Mr Persson has argued that the country could not hold a referendum before completing a detailed public information campaign on the practical implications of Euro membership, which is due to begin this year.



Persson's party will debate Emu

EURO DIARY

FRANCE

Académie rules in favour of euro-zone

The Académie Française, the highest authority on the French language, has put an end to the increasingly heated debate dividing France's intellectuals over the appropriate term to describe the geographic area using the new European single currency - the euro.

UNITED KINGDOM

Europhobe press keeps quiet

The smooth launch of the euro - and the absence of widespread panic or insurrection - spoiled the new year for the editors of some of Britain's euro-sceptic newspapers.

GERMANY

Little triumphalism

Germany's politicians have been remarkably reluctant to sound fanfares. In Bonn you would hardly notice the difference since Monday, and not just because Gerhard Schröder only returned mid-week from his holiday on the Costa del Sol.

SPAIN

Few regrets for peseta

El País, Spain's leading daily, greeted the currency's introduction as "the most important decision since the European integration process was launched in the early 1950s".

BELGIUM

Not a dissenting voice

Even before the single currency was launched there was a distinct euro theme to Christmas decorations strung up around Brussels' Grande Place. Many shops quickly entered into the spirit by converting their computers and sticking euro symbols in windows.

ITALY

A moment of nostalgia

It was a week of mixed emotion for Italians. The arrival of the euro has been greeted enthusiastically in newspaper headlines as a "new chapter in history", a "revolution for Italy". Yet, strangely, there was a moment of nostalgia for the departing lira, the most crisis-ridden currency in post-war Europe.

EU chiefs fig

Mahathir ends uncertainty with reshuffle

Steel dispute with Japanese

Revolution of

سكنا من الاصل

WEEK OF UPROAR SANTER DENOUNCES ACCUSATIONS OF IMPROPER LINKS BETWEEN HIS FAMILY AND EUROPEAN FINANCES

EU chiefs fight off corruption charges

By Neil Buckley in Brussels

European commissioners yesterday went on the offensive against mounting allegations of corruption, as frantic manoeuvring continued in the European Parliament ahead of a vote next week which could lead to them all being sacked.

mounted against him. At the same time, one of the commissioners particularly targeted by the parliament, Edith Cresson, said she was "sickened" by what she called a "vindictive personal attack" against her.

between herself and alleged mismanagement in the running of the Leonardo programme of youth training, for which she is the commissioner responsible. She insisted that no fraud had been found in the programme, which was about to be cleared by UCLAF, the EU's fraud investigation unit.

media since last summer. The Commission, meanwhile, clarified one of the more apparently bizarre rumours circulating in Brussels this week, that it was in possession of rifles.

understood to have surfaced from papers on alleged fraud and mismanagement passed to the Court of Auditors, the EU's spending watchdog, by Paul van Buitenen, an assistant internal auditor at the Commission.

cerns over mismanagement in EU programmes. The Socialist group, parliament's biggest, continued to suggest yesterday it might reverse its original position and support the censure motion there was clear "head of steam" behind attempts by other groups to sack individual commissioners.

Mahathir ends uncertainty with reshuffle

By T.J. Tan in Kuala Lumpur and Peter Montagnon in London

Mahathir Mohamad, Malaysia's prime minister, yesterday appointed Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, the former minister, as his deputy, ending months of uncertainty following the sacking of Anwar Ibrahim in September.

was now favourite eventually to succeed the prime minister himself, they said. Dr Mahathir has carefully skirted this issue as well as the risk of a divisive contest within his own party by deferring, probably for about 18 months, elections due in June to top positions in the ruling United Malay National Organisation (UMNO), whose deputy president is also traditionally deputy prime minister.

Yesterday's announcement also appeared to be carefully timed to distract from a separate development whereby Mr Anwar launched a suit against Dr Mahathir, charging that the prime minister's position as home minister conferred on him responsibility for injuries sustained when he was beaten following his arrest.



Abdullah Ahmad Badawi: Malaysia's new general deputy premier

as deputy prime minister Mr Abdullah was also given the home office portfolio, which includes responsibility for internal security and the police. He will also continue to be foreign minister. The other change was the appointment of Daim Zainuddin, who already has responsibility for the economy, as finance minister.

Mahathir's power, they will do little in practice to loosen his grip. Mr Abdullah is known for his loyalty to Dr Mahathir and Mr Daim, in particular, is a trusty lieutenant.

tioned as a possible successor to Dr Mahathir, he is not particularly ambitious, appearing to have been quite content as foreign minister, a post he won in 1991.

Steel dispute worsens over Japanese exports

By Our International Staff

Global steel trading tensions escalated yesterday as Japan denied US claims that it had voluntarily agreed to reduce exports and European Union producers threatened two fresh anti-dumping suits against Asian and East European producers.

appropriate WTO-consistent actions under our trade laws to ensure that imports from Japan return to pre-crisis levels, including, if necessary, self-initiated actions under our Section 201 and antidumping law."

at the US plan. A spokesman for Sir Leon Brittan, the trade commissioner, said the EU was doing "more than its fair share" to absorb steel imports in the wake of the Asian crisis. The EU estimates that imports rose by 50 per cent in 1998.

Canada winning struggle to cut unemployment

By Scott Morrison in Toronto

The Canadian economy generated almost 450,000 new jobs in 1998, representing an annual job growth rate of 3.2 per cent. The news yesterday came as welcome relief to political leaders, who have struggled this decade to reduce the high unemployment rate.

decade. The national 8 per cent unemployment rate is the lowest it has been in the 1990s. Most encouraging was a sharp jump in youth employment in 1998, with 143,000 new jobs, the largest gain in 20 years.

GOVERNATORIAL AND STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS CLAMOUR GROWS ACROSS COUNTRY FOR A RETURN TO TRUE FEDERALISM

Devolution offers fresh hope in Nigeria

By William Wallis in Lagos

Nigeria takes the penultimate step on its road to democracy today when the country's three political parties contest elections for state governors and assemblies.

Nigeria, 36 in total, has steadily increased along with their dependence on the centralised military regimes which have ruled Africa's most populous nation for all but 10 of its 38 years of independence.

ing campaigning. But the weaknesses of the emerging political structures have also been underlined. In some instances losers in acrimonious party primaries crossed the floor to join the ranks of their former opponents.

from across the country. Their ability to capitalise on initial successes will be challenged today by an electoral pact signed recently by the two other parties qualified to run.

the other hand harbours prominent politicians who supported Gen Abacha's discredited plans to succeed himself in elections.

Both parties claim the PDP is being supported from the shadows by powerful members of the military with an interest in preserving the status quo.

German jobs figures take shine off euro

By Ralph Atkins in Bonn

German unemployment increased unexpectedly sharply last month, giving additional ammunition to the sceptics who have been warning about Germany's readiness for the new European single currency.

to introduce "opt-out" clauses in regional or industry sector wage agreements, allowing individual businesses to agree their own terms with staff.

German public opinion has warmed to the euro. But the sceptics also see little reason to repent. Wilhelm Hankel, the economics professor who last year tried in the constitutional court to stop the euro's launch, says he remains worried about the currency's stability.

Joachim Starbatty, a fellow petitioner, says: "The euro's start was well prepared and went successfully - but the risks remain."

Boeing orders rise 15.5% in 1998

By Michael Shapiro, Aerospace Correspondent, in London

Boeing of the US said yesterday that aircraft orders had risen 15.5 per cent last year, in spite of the Asian financial crisis and loss of important customers such as British Airways.

NEWS DIGEST

MIDDLE EAST PEACE PROCESS

Israel presses US for Wye pact aid despite standoff

Israel is continuing to press Washington for \$1.2bn in aid to help carry out the Wye River accords with the Palestinians signed in October, even though Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, has frozen implementation of the agreements.

GREEK PRICES

Inflation falls to 3.9%

Greece's headline inflation rate last month dipped to 3.9 per cent from 4.2 per cent in November, amid optimism from Yannis Papantoniou, the economy minister, that consumer prices will approach those of the euro-zone by the end of this year.

FRENCH INTERNET COSTS

Law on pricing threatened

Laurent Fabius, speaker of the French national assembly, yesterday threatened to impose legislation to cut the cost of internet connection if the government, regulators and telecommunications operators failed to agree on a formula to lower costs to the user.

OLYMPIC SCANDAL

Salt Lake City heads to roll

The president and vice-president of the Salt Lake Olympic Organising Committee are expected to step aside in the wake of a bribery scandal. The officials were involved in Salt Lake's successful bid to host the 2002 Winter Olympics.

COMMODITIES & AGRICULTURE

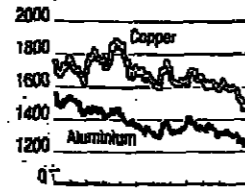
Base metals tumble as funds sell

WEEK IN THE MARKETS

By Paul Solman

Base metals plunged, with the London Metal Exchange's flagship three-month copper contract falling to an 11 1/2-year low...

Aluminium/copper prices



LME warehouse stocks

Table showing LME warehouse stocks for various metals like Aluminium, Copper, Lead, Zinc, Tin.

World oil prices strengthened in London, helped by American Petroleum Institute figures showing a drawdown in US stocks...

Meanwhile, the IPE said its energy futures trading volumes rose by a third last year, a result of the extreme volatility of prices...

BASE METALS

Table of London Metal Exchange prices for various metals like Gold, Silver, Platinum.

PRECIOUS METALS continued

Table of Precious Metals prices including Gold, Silver, Platinum, Palladium.

GRAINS AND OIL SEEDS

Table of Grains and Oil Seeds prices including Wheat, Soybeans, Corn.

SOFTS

Table of Softs prices including Cocoa, Coffee, Sugar.

MEAT AND LIVESTOCK

Table of Meat and Livestock prices including Live Cattle, Pork, Hides.

ENERGY

Table of Energy prices including Oil, Natural Gas, Heating Oil.

PRECIOUS METALS

Table of Precious Metals prices including Gold, Silver, Platinum, Palladium.

PULP AND PAPER

Table of Pulp and Paper prices including Pulp, Paper.

LONDON TRADED OPTIONS

Table of London Traded Options for various commodities.

LONDON SPOT MARKETS

Table of London Spot Markets including Oil, Gas, Metals.

WEEKLY PRICE CHANGES

Table showing weekly price changes for various commodities.

WORLD BOND PRICES

Table of World Bond Prices for various countries and maturities.

EUROPEAN, US markets diverge

The European Central Bank would have to cut interest rates in the near future. The decoupling of the two markets is striking...

US INTEREST RATES

Table of US Interest Rates for various maturities.

BOND FUTURES AND OPTIONS

Table of Bond Futures and Options for various countries.

UK Gilts Prices

Table of UK Gilts Prices for various maturities.

UK Indices

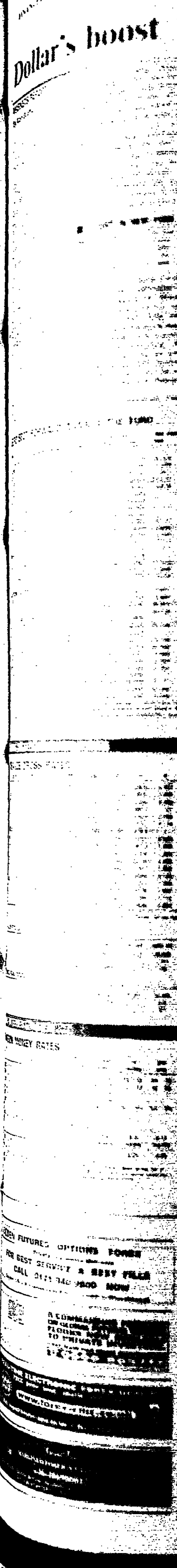
Table of UK Indices including FTSE 100, FTSE 250.

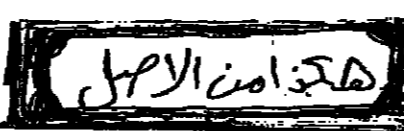
UK Indices

Table of UK Indices including FTSE 100, FTSE 250.

Other Financial Data

Table of Other Financial Data including Futures, Options, and Interest Rates.





CURRENCIES & MONEY

Dollar's boost

MARKETS REPORT

By Alan Beattie

The dollar shot up against the euro and sterling yesterday on the back of employment data showing the US economy continuing to surge ahead.

Traders struggled to recall the last time that a piece of data rather than rumours of capital flows had moved the dollar, a tentative sign that some degree of normality was returning to the currency markets.

After rising by nearly a cent in a few minutes after the data were released in the middle of the European session, the dollar consolidated its new position. At the end of London trading it closed at \$1.155 against the euro, up from \$1.157 the previous day, and \$1.64 against sterling, up from Thursday's close of \$1.65.

But against the yen, the dollar remained unmoved by the data, evidence that many traders expect the dollar's next move to be further down against the Japanese currency.

The dollar's jump came after the US Labor Department reported that non-farm payrolls leapt a huge 378,000 in December. Even after adjusting for the effect of unseasonably mild weather in the US, which was thought to have contributed most of the 100,000 rise in construction jobs in December, the number was well above most expectations.

"A lot of people are now beginning to wonder if the next move in rates in the US will be up or down."

"Obviously the current account looks worrying," he said, "but as long as you promise 30 per cent returns on the Dow, there will be no shortage of capital to finance it."

The dollar interest rate

futures market took a tumble on the news, contracts expiring around the end of 1999 and early 2000 falling by around 10 basis points as traders revised up their view of the likely interest rate path.

Interest rate futures and forward rate agreements now hardly price in any fall in US interest rates in 1999, and suggest they are likely to rise in the first half of 2000.

Sterling managed to split the difference between the dollar and the euro when the sharp movement came, falling against the former but rising against the latter.

It closed yesterday at 50.704 against the euro, up from 50.708 on Thursday. This was the first test case of how sterling will behave when faced with a shock to its traditional partner, the dollar. It is a truism in the currency markets that although the UK has a higher trade exposure to continental Europe, sterling more often takes its lead from the dollar than European currencies.

Some had speculated that with the inception of the euro, this familiar relationship would weaken.

POUND IN NEW YORK

Table with 4 columns: Bid, Ask, Bid, Ask. Shows pound rates in New York.

EURO SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE EURO

Table showing Euro spot and forward rates against the Euro for various countries and currencies.

DOLLAR SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE DOLLAR

Table showing Dollar spot and forward rates against the Dollar for various countries and currencies.

POUND SPOT FORWARD AGAINST THE POUND

Table showing Pound spot and forward rates against the Pound for various countries and currencies.

WORLD INTEREST RATES

Table showing world interest rates for various countries and currencies.

INTERNATIONAL CURRENCY RATES

Table showing international currency rates for various countries and currencies.

CROSS RATES AND DERIVATIVES

EXCHANGE CROSS RATES

Table showing exchange cross rates for various currencies.

UK INTEREST RATES

LONDON MONEY RATES

Table showing London money rates for various currencies.

EMU EUROPEAN CURRENCY UNIT RATES

Table showing EMU European currency unit rates for various countries.

BASE INTEREST RATES

Table showing base interest rates for various banks and currencies.

OTHER CURRENCIES

Table showing other currencies and their rates.

Table showing D-Mark futures and Japanese yen futures.

Table showing Sterling futures and other derivatives.

Table showing Philadelphia RE 278 options and other derivatives.

Table showing Euro bank futures and other derivatives.

Table showing UK interest rates and London money rates.

Table showing three-month sterling futures and other derivatives.

Table showing base interest rates for various banks.

Table showing other currencies and their rates.

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Authorised Investment Funds FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

FT Managed Funds Service is available on the telephone. Call the FT Centre Help Desk on (+44 171) 632 4278 for more details.

AUTHORISED INVESTMENT FUNDS - Unit Trusts and OEICs

Table listing various investment funds including their names, managers, and performance metrics.

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Main table of investment funds with columns for name, manager, and performance data.

Authorised Investment Funds

Continuation of the investment funds table from the middle section.

OFEX FACILITY

OFEX is an unregulated trading facility for share dealing in unquoted companies which is operated by J.P. Jenkinson Limited in association with Haverstock Limited, a joint company.

Table listing OFEX facility participants and their details.

PLEASE NOTE THAT FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE IS REPRESENTED BY THE ABOVE BOX NAMES IN INFORMATION ABOVE AND DOES NOT HAVE A SEPARATE LISTING. THE ABOVE LISTING IS NOT A RECOMMENDATION BY FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE.

EASDAQ table showing stock market data for various companies.

Guide to pricing of Authorised Investment Funds

Compiled with the assistance of AUIF-SG. All funds within this analysis, whether OEICs or unit trusts are authorised in the UK by the Financial Services Authority.

FT-MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Authorised and Insured

FT Capital Unit Trust Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Capital Help Desk on (44 171) 873 4331 for more details.

Main table containing financial data for various funds, including columns for fund names, prices, and other metrics. The table is organized into multiple columns and rows, covering a wide range of investment options.

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PROPERTY UNIT TRUSTS. Includes sections for various property trusts and insurance services.

INSURANCES. Details various insurance policies and providers.

OTHER UK UNIT TRUSTS. Lists other UK unit trusts and their details.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: صكنا من الاصل

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Insurances, Money Markets and Other

FT Capital Markets Prices are available over the telephone. Call the FT Capital Markets Desk on (444 171) 872 4276 for more details.

Main table containing financial data for various insurance, money market, and other funds. Columns include fund names, prices, and performance metrics.

MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Table listing management services providers, including names, addresses, and contact information.

Money Market Trust Funds

Table listing money market trust funds, including fund names and key details.

Money Market Bank Accounts

Table listing money market bank accounts, including bank names and account details.

Additional text and notices at the bottom right of the page, including contact information and legal disclaimers.

FT MANAGED FUNDS SERVICE

Offshore Insurances and Other Funds

FT Online Unit Trust Prices are available over the Internet. Call the FT Online Help Desk on (44 171) 873 4226 for more details.

Table listing various fund categories and individual fund details, including names like 'Alpha Fund Management Ltd' and 'Global Asset Management'.

Table listing various fund categories and individual fund details, including names like 'Global Asset Management - Cont.' and 'The Environmental Investment Co Ltd'.

Table listing various fund categories and individual fund details, including names like 'Jupiter Asset Management' and 'Montgomery Equity Communications'.

Table listing various fund categories and individual fund details, including names like 'Schroder Investment Management' and 'The Vanguard Group'.

WHY YOU SHOULD BE MORE CONCERNED ABOUT THE DATE ON YOUR PC THAN THE ONE ON YOUR CHAMPAGNE BOTTLE. Serving Institutional Investors Worldwide.

OTHER OFFSHORE FUNDS

Table listing other offshore funds and their details.

MANAGED FUNDS NOTES

Notes regarding managed funds, including information on currency, fees, and performance.

Large vertical text on the right side of the page, partially cut off, containing the headline 'Takeover talk pu...'.

Handwritten Arabic text at the bottom left: 'مركزنا من الامارات'.

Takeover talk pushes Footsie to record high

MARKETS REPORT

by Steve Thompson, UK Stock Market Editor
Intense speculation that another big takeover or merger is imminent in the telecoms sector, plus more bid activity in breweries, gave a further boost to sentiment in UK equities.

off its best levels during the last hour of trading, eventually closing 46.0 ahead at 6,147.2. That extended the rise over the week, which has seen an influx of overseas money into London and other European markets, to 264.6 points, or 4.5 per cent. London was already surging ahead before the C & W speculation built up to fever pitch, with Wall Street's overnight recovery from an early sell-off prompting a fresh wave of overseas buying interest in UK stocks.

UK institutions. But some of the UK's takeover euphoria tumbled to its knees in the week, with Cable & Wireless shares well off their best levels and many telecom specialists adopting a sceptical view of the earlier stories that Deutsche Telekom might be preparing a bid. Nevertheless, Cable & Wireless was still the best Footsie performer and Orange and Telewest were also aggressively bought. Nevertheless, many dealers said the London market was looking for at least one big bid or merger in the short to medium term. The junior FTSE indices shared in the market's surge, with the

FTSE 250 advancing 29.7 to 3747.5, up 0.5 per cent on the week. The FTSE Smallcap index was up the week of 3 per cent. Marketmakers said they had been taken by surprise by the sudden burst of buying interest for UK equities at the start of the new year and attributed much of the buying interest to the successful launch of the euro, which they said had encouraged a surge of international demand for European stocks, including UK issues. "It has become increasingly clear that the US funds are keen to buy London stocks which they feel will include plenty of bid

candidates, post the launch of the euro. And overseas institutions are tending to disregard the worries about earnings downgrades and profits warnings." Nevertheless, RMC, one of the UK's biggest building materials companies, upset the market with a profits warning yesterday and saw its shares tumble almost 8 per cent. But the takeover stories continued with the brewery sector seeing a rarely used strategy, invoked by Marston Thompson, which turned the tables on Wolverhampton & Dudley Breweries by launching a counter-bid. Turnover reached 1.06bn shares.

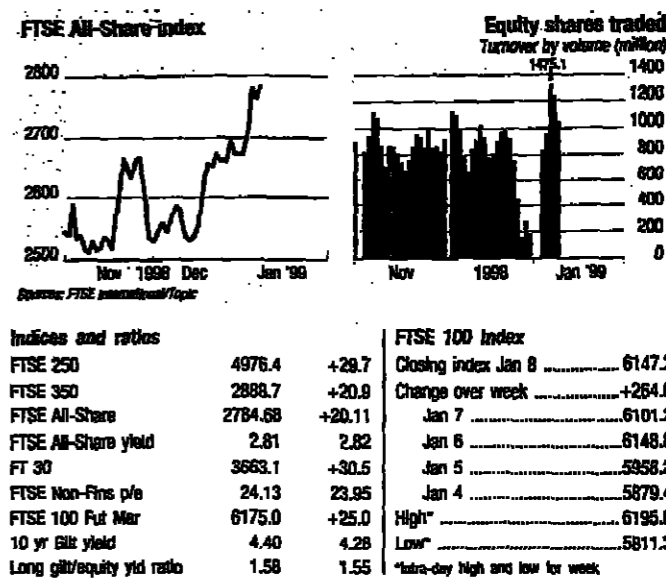


Table with columns: Index Name, Closing Index, Change over week, etc. Includes FTSE 100 Index (6147.2), FTSE 250 (3747.5), FTSE Smallcap (2748.6), FTSE All-Share (6101.2), FTSE All-Share yield (2.61), FT 30 (5653.1), FTSE Non-Fin 20 (24.13), FTSE 100 FT Mar (6175.0), 10 yr gilt yield (4.40), Long gilt yield rate (1.58).

Table titled 'TRADING VOLUME IN MAJOR STOCKS' listing various companies like AstraZeneca, Glaxo, BT, and their trading volume and price changes.

Table titled 'EQUITY FUTURES AND OPTIONS TRADING' showing various indices like FTSE 100 INDEX FUTURES, FTSE 250 INDEX FUTURES, and their trading details.

C&W leaps on takeover speculation
The spotlight was firmly fixed on Cable & Wireless as it talked to the telecom group had put a "For Sale" sign outside its door spread through the market. The shares came off the top to close 24% or 9.15 per cent ahead at 888.9p, the best performer in the Footsie, as turnover soared to a hefty 16m.

Analyst David Poutney was pointing out to clients that while the retail banks were on a multiple of 14 times earnings, the mortgage banks - which are expected to face intense competition over the coming months - were on a prospective p/e of 16. The negative noises on Halifax and Woolwich follow cautious comments by Credit Lyonnais Securities on Thursday. Halifax fell 2% to 815p with Salomon Smith Barney also highlighting the valuation in its latest sector review. Woolwich slipped 3 to 340p.

Table titled 'FT 30 INDEX' showing percentage changes since Dec 31, 1997 based on Friday, Jan 8, 1999. Lists top and bottom performing stocks.

Table titled 'FTSE - LEADERS & LAGGARDS' showing percentage changes since Dec 31, 1997 based on Friday, Jan 8, 1999. Lists top and bottom performing stocks.

to realise shareholder value, given its current search for a chief executive." Although dealers spoke of a takeover price of about \$11, James McCaffery at SG Securities said: "Breaking up the business into its components would reveal a valuation of up to \$12." Specialists pointed out any bid would have to reflect the value of the group's global assets. Apart from its 54 per cent stake in Hongkong Telecom, C&W owns a controlling stake in Cable & Wireless Communications, a share in mobile phone company One2One, and the recently acquired US internet assets previously owned by MCI Worldcom. CWC was also in demand, the shares closing 27% up at 699.9p.

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Table titled 'TRADITIONAL OVERTAKERS' listing companies like BP, BT, and their takeover status.

Table titled 'FTSE Actuaries Share Indices' showing performance metrics for various insurance and financial services companies.

Table titled 'LIFE EQUITY OPTIONS' listing various equity options with columns for date, price, and volume.

Table titled 'NEW 52 WEEK HIGHS AND LOWS' listing companies that have reached their 52-week price extremes.

Large table titled 'The UK Series' containing a comprehensive list of UK stocks, their prices, changes, and other market data. Includes columns for company name, price, change, and various market indicators.

LONDON SHARE SERVICE

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	

BANKS, RETAIL

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Financial Times Surveys

Northern Ireland

Thursday April 1

For further information please contact:
 Charles Blandford
 Tel: +353 1 676 1184 Fax: +353 1 676 2125
 email: chasb@indigo.ie
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 Tel: +44 171 873 4356 Fax: +44 171 873 4862
 email: tracey.endacott@FT.com

FINANCIAL TIMES
 No FT, no comment

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	
ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES	

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FOOD PRODUCERS - Continued

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OTHER INVESTMENT TRUSTS

The following investment trusts are available for inclusion in the FT100 Active Share Index:

Table listing investment trusts with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

INVESTMENT COMPANIES

Table listing investment companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

LEISURE & HOTELS

Table listing leisure and hotel companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

LIFE ASSURANCE

Table listing life assurance companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

MEDIA

Table listing media companies with columns for Name, Price, and % Change.

MEDIA - Continued

Table listing media companies (continued).

OIL EXPLORATION & PRODUCTION

Table listing oil exploration and production companies.

OIL, INTEGRATED

Table listing integrated oil companies.

OTHER FINANCIAL

Table listing other financial companies.

PAPER, PACKAGING & PRINTING

Table listing paper, packaging, and printing companies.

PHARMACEUTICALS

Table listing pharmaceutical companies.

PROPERTY - Continued

Table listing property companies (continued).

RETAILERS, FOOD

Table listing food retailers.

RETAILERS, GENERAL

Table listing general retailers.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Table listing telecommunications companies.

TOBACCO

Table listing tobacco companies.

TRANSPORT

Table listing transport companies.

SUPPORT SERVICES

Table listing support services companies.

WATER

Table listing water companies.

AMERICANS

Table listing American companies.

CANADIANS

Table listing Canadian companies.

SOUTH AFRICANS

Table listing South African companies.

TRADED INDEX SECURITIES

Table listing traded index securities.

AIM

Table listing Alternative Investment Market (AIM) securities.

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TRANSPORT - Continued

Table listing transport companies (continued).

AIM

Alternative Investment Market

The Alternative Investment Market, designed primarily for small companies, is regulated by the London Stock Exchange for the UK and the Securities and Futures Authority for the Channel Islands.

Table listing AIM securities.

GUIDE TO LONDON SHARE SERVICE

Prices and trading volumes for the London Share Service are derived from Data, part of Financial Times Information.

Company information is based on data from the FT100 Active Share Index.

Changing information is shown in prices unless otherwise stated. For FT100 and AIM securities, prices are shown in pence unless otherwise stated. For AIM securities, prices are shown in pence unless otherwise stated.

Trading volumes are shown in millions of shares unless otherwise stated. For AIM securities, trading volumes are shown in millions of shares unless otherwise stated.

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Shares mixed after release of jobs report

Highs & Lows shown on a 52 week basis

WORLD STOCK MARKETS

NORTH AMERICA

Table of stock market data for North America, including indices and individual stock prices.

Table of stock market data for Europe (EUROPE (NON-EMU)).

Table of stock market data for Europe (EUROPE (EMU) Prices in €).

Table of stock market data for Africa.

Table of stock market data for Asia/Pacific.

Table of stock market data for Latin America.

Table of stock market data for Indices.

Table of stock market data for Ratios.

Table of stock market data for New York Stock Exchange.

Table of stock market data for Pacific.

Table of stock market data for Futures.

Table of stock market data for DAX.

Table of stock market data for Nikkei.

Table of stock market data for Hang Seng.

Table of stock market data for ASX.

Advertisement for Rockwell Science Center, featuring an image of a microscope and text: 'Rockwell Science Center works in partnership with more than 200 universities, laboratories and companies world-wide.'

Large advertisement for a research report titled 'Shares mixed after release of jobs report'. It features a large headline, sub-headline 'Power after setback', and several columns of text discussing market trends and economic indicators.

Handwritten Arabic text: 'مصدرنا من الاصل'

Shares mixed after release of jobs report

US blue chips and high-tech shares rose in early trading, but the broader market was more mixed following a stronger than expected labour report, writes John Labate in New York.

By early afternoon the Dow Jones Industrial Average had gained 54.59 to 9,650.25. The broader Standard & Poor's 500 index had stalled, however, falling 1.01 to 1,268.72.

Surging internet and telecom prices continued to lift the Nasdaq composite index, which was 21.32 higher, a gain of nearly 1 per cent, to 2,247.41.

The morning release of the monthly employment report helped some stocks. Payrolls in December grew by 378,000, a much stronger return than analysts had expected, providing the latest evidence that fourth-quarter growth will be strong.

The unemployment rate fell to 4.3 per cent, and stocks rose despite the threat of higher interest rates which could accompany economic strength.

"It's not the economic cycle that is controlling the stock market, it's the mood cycle, and the mood is to buy stocks," said Alfred Gold, chief market strategist at A.G. Edwards in St Louis.

Cyclical shares gave the Dow a boost, with Alu-

Bank and steelmakers lead Frankfurt higher

underperform" on the sector. Thyssen surged €3.00 to €187.50 and Krupp €7.50 to €125.50.

Deutsche Telekom, linked by speculation to a possible takeover bid for Cable & Wireless of the UK, fell €1.63 to €32.53. Mannesmann dipped €2.38 to €114.25.

PARIS ended 14.75 ahead at 4,245.42 on the CAC 40 index helped by a bounce for technology-related stocks and another strong session for LVMH.

Crucially, the rise in the CAC 40 index helped by a bounce for technology-related stocks and another strong session for LVMH.

AMSTERDAM ended 1.81 lower at 559.27 on the AEX index in spite of another strong showing for tech shares. Philips rose €2.45 to €65.85 and the fierce rally at Beas continued apace. The

issues and 293 rising. Concern over the strengthening yen hurt many exporters' shares. Sony was down 1.69 per cent or ¥130 at ¥7,570. Honda Motor fell 4.75, or ¥160 to ¥3,700. Toyota Motor lost 3.88 per cent or ¥115 to ¥2,850. Bridgestone dropped 2.96 per cent or ¥70 to ¥2,295 and TDK was down 6.19 per cent or ¥20 to ¥294.00.

The banking sector also lost ground amid fears that a strong currency would hit their foreign-currency denominated assets.

Sakura Bank, the second most heavily traded stock of the day, fell 2.73 per cent or ¥7 to ¥250, while Sumitomo Bank lost 1.8 per cent or ¥18 to ¥1,107 and the Industrial Bank of Japan dropped 4.1 per cent or ¥22 to ¥515. In Osaka, the OSE index fell 57.95 to 14,461.11.

BOMBAY continued to push steadily higher to extend its gains on the week to about 11 per cent. The BSE index rose 98.75 or 3 per cent to 3,387.84. A number of blue chips

cyclical stocks outperformed the market. The general index closed 1.06 down at 9149.1. It has put on 5.4 per cent this week.

Investors lean towards stocks that failed to rise with the rest of the market in the days after the launch of trading in euros.

Aceria, the steelmaker, rose €1.04 or 11.2 per cent to €10.44 while fellow steel manufacturer Acerinox

closed €1.40 or 6.9 per cent higher at €25. OSLO surged to its highest close for more than four months as a rise in the oil price helped offshore stocks.

The total index ended 30.23 or 3.0 per cent up at 1,032.12. The market has gained 10.5 per cent already this year. Fred Olsen Energy jumped Nkr10.05 or 18.9 per cent to Nkr166, helped by a broker's recommendation.

Currency volatility hits Tokyo

issues and 293 rising. Concern over the strengthening yen hurt many exporters' shares. Sony was down 1.69 per cent or ¥130 at ¥7,570. Honda Motor fell 4.75, or ¥160 to ¥3,700. Toyota Motor lost 3.88 per cent or ¥115 to ¥2,850. Bridgestone dropped 2.96 per cent or ¥70 to ¥2,295 and TDK was down 6.19 per cent or ¥20 to ¥294.00.

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scorched ahead. Telcel, Reliance Industries and State Bank of India all jumped 7.9 per cent. Telcel added Rs15.30 to Rs206.70, Reliance Rs10.30 to Rs140.30 and Bank of India Rs13.50 to Rs183.50.

JAKARTA, up more than 15 per cent in the three days to Thursday, ran into profit-taking which sent the composite index down 18.44 or 4 per cent at 439.49.

Telkom gave up Rp250 to Rp3,475 in 26.4m shares traded and Indah Kiat lost

São Paulo rallies after slide over debt setback

SAO PAULO, down more than 5 per cent on Thursday after a Brazilian state ran into debt difficulties, rallied on what brokers described as modest bargain hunting.

Traders felt the market had over-reacted to the news of a 90-day moratorium on payments due to the federal government by Minas Gerais, Brazil's third biggest state.

In early trading, Telebras receipts recovered 0.1 per cent to R\$92.30 and the

benchmark Bovespa index was 27 higher at 6,982 at mid-session.

MEXICO CITY also recovered in subdued trading, the IBC index adding 8.57 to 3,673.82 at mid-session. Market heavyweight Telcel rose 30 centavos to 33.70 pesos.

GARACAS pushed higher, aided by a better start for international oil prices. At mid-session, the IBC index was up 121.20 or 2.1 per cent at 4,643.88.

South Africa

Johnannesburg rose for the fourth session running with strong financials underpinned by base rate cuts. The all share index rose 91.7 to 8,519.1 and industrials 13.3 per cent to 6,885.4 but the main drive came from financials which rose 2.3 per cent to 8,394.4. Golds improved on the back of a better day for bullion. The sector added 1.7 per cent to 982.4.

Details of business done should be shown below with consent from last Thursday's Stock Exchange Official List and should not be reproduced without permission. The data is delivered by email, part of Financial Times Information. Details relate to those securities not included in the FT Share Information Service. The prices are those at which the business was done in the 24 hours up to 5.15pm on Thursday, they are not an order of execution but do approximate to what the market would have done in the absence of the securities in which the business was done. The securities in which the business was done are listed in the four previous days & given with the relevant date. The size of individual deals is rounded to the nearest thousand and represented with parentheses, where available. * Bargains at special prices. * Bargains since the previous day.

British Government Stocks

UK Treasury 2 1/2% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 75.75 (04/28)
UK Treasury 2 1/8% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 75.75 (04/28)
UK Treasury 2 1/4% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 75.75 (04/28)

Overseas Bonds

Bank of Scotland (Governor & Co) of 8.375% Un Redeemable -14 (04/28)
Bank of England (Governor & Co) of 8.00% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 102.50 (04/28)

Debt Finance

Bank of Scotland (Governor & Co) of 8.375% Un Redeemable -14 (04/28)
Bank of England (Governor & Co) of 8.00% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 102.50 (04/28)

Listed Companies (excluding investment trusts)

600 Group PLC 3 1/2% Cum Div 01/01/99-01/01/00 (04/28) 102.50 (04/28)
600 Group PLC 4 1/2% Cum Div 01/01/99-01/01/00 (04/28) 102.50 (04/28)

Foreign Stocks, Bonds, and Coupons Payable in London

Abbey National Treasury Bonds PLC 5.25% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 102.50 (04/28)
Abbey National Treasury Bonds PLC 5.75% 07/04/2007-09-01-01 (04/28) 102.50 (04/28)

LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE - DEALINGS

Table with multiple columns listing stock deals, including company names, share counts, and prices. Includes sections for British Government Stocks, Overseas Bonds, Debt Finance, Listed Companies, Foreign Stocks, and Investment Trusts.

ENGINEERING/TELECOMMUNICATIONS SWITCH FROM TRADITIONAL ACTIVITIES SETS COURSE FOR 15% RETURN ON ASSETS BY 2000

Strong telecoms lift Mannesmann 50%

By Tony Barber in Frankfurt
Mannesmann, the German telecommunications and engineering group, yesterday predicted strong net profits for 1998 after reporting a 50 per cent increase in earnings on ordinary activities to €1.3bn (\$1.52bn).

three-quarters of Mannesmann's profit in 1997 and accounted for most of its growth. Mannesmann has successfully switched from its traditional steel and engineering industries to telecoms in the past three years, divesting almost 40 businesses and moving aggressively into Germany's deregulated telephone market.

According to Mannesmann, the group's overall return on assets has risen steadily in recent years, from 8 per cent in 1996 and 10.3 per cent in 1997 to more than 13 per cent last year. Mannesmann's evolution from heavy industry to advanced technology parallels the path taken by other German companies such as Pruessag, the former steel and coal group which now concentrates on tourism and services.

Touch were successful. This in turn could strengthen Mannesmann's market position, the analysts said. Mannesmann, one of the Frankfurt stock market's top performers last year, said its mobile, fixed-line and other telecom operations were largely responsible for a 14 per cent rise in sales to about €19bn.

Europe's largest telecoms group, yesterday said the number of clients using its D1 mobile service rose 87 per cent last year, to almost 5.5m, writes Ralph Atkins in Bonn.

The rise reflected strong growth in the German mobile market, encouraged by sweeping price cuts, although D1 still lies behind Mannesmann's D2 network. Separately, E-Plus said yesterday it would cut prices by up to 72 per cent, starting next month.

Gucci revenues climb strongly

By Alice Rawsthorn in London and Sander Iskandar in Paris

Gucci, the Italian fashion company, ended a week of intense bid speculation yesterday by announcing a healthy 23 per cent increase in revenues during November and December against the same period of the previous year.

Prada had nursed a loss on the investment, for which it paid \$340m, when Gucci's shares weakened as the luxury market deteriorated. After LVMH's intervention, Prada's holding is now valued at more than \$400m.

Share strength sidelines creativity at AT&T

By Richard Waters in New York

John Malone, the great financial engineer of the US cable television industry, appears to have changed his spots. As the boss of TCI, the second-biggest US cable company, Mr Malone has acquired a deserved reputation for financial wheeling and dealing. The astute structure of his debt-laden enterprises, and his shuffling of assets between them, has bedeviled even sophisticated investors.

neering would have got in the way of the monumental job AT&T faces of combining the assorted acquisitions and joint ventures it has announced over the past year.

Perhaps equally importantly, Ma Bell's own powerful stock market performance since June has reduced the need for financial creativity. Even Mr Malone, it seems, is now happy to hold a unified AT&T stock.

valuation on other wireless networks - and AT&T, through its 1998 acquisition of McCaw Cellular, remains the biggest carrier in this fast-growing market in the US.

To help offset any disappointment from its change of tack yesterday, AT&T announced plans to buy back \$4bn of its shares and carry out a 3-for-2 stock split - traditionally a way in which US companies have expressed strong confidence in their future share prices.

While declaring himself "personally extremely pleased" with AT&T's change of plan yesterday, Mr Malone will no doubt be keeping a close eye on the performance of his new AT&T shares - just in case a bit of financial tinkering is ever needed.



John Malone: 'personally extremely pleased' with change of plan AP

The financial engineering would have got in the way of the monumental job AT&T faces of combining its assorted acquisitions and joint ventures

smaller cable operators. The change of plan did not mean that integrating AT&T's telecom operations with TCI's cable networks was proving more difficult than expected, one person close to AT&T said. But all the management headaches that would have been caused by separate classes of stock and governance to questions of how to put prices on transactions between different parts of the new group - could have got in the way, this person added.

benefits have been on the cost side: AT&T said yesterday that it had cut its selling, general and administrative - or overhead - costs to 26 per cent of revenues last year, from 30 per cent the year before.

Revenues, however, only grew by 3 per cent, well below the industry average. AT&T's share price is also likely to have benefited from the merger talk, this year involving AirTouch, the wireless carrier. That has prompted analysts in the US and Europe to put a higher

Seagram job cuts

By Alice Rawsthorn

Seagram, the Canadian entertainment group, is expected next week to finalise plans to merge its Universal Music operations in Europe, Asia and Latin America with those of PolyGram, the Dutch music group it has acquired for \$1.1bn.

losses will be in North America, where Seagram has already unveiled proposals to restructure its music operations. Next week Seagram is to specify the new operating structure for all other regions, which is intended to attain annual cost savings of roughly \$170m by shedding some 1,000 employees.

FT/S&P ACTUARIES WORLD INDICES

Table with columns for Country, Index, % Change, etc. Includes Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Taiwan, Thailand, United Kingdom, USA, etc.

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FTSE GOLD MINES INDEX. Jan 7 to May 10. Year to Date % Change. Total % Change.

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COMPANIES IN MARKETS

BUILDING HOMES OF INDIVIDUALITY FROM SCOTLAND TO THE SOUTH COAST

Weekend January 9/January 10 1999

Munich Re transfers \$36bn shareholdings

Assets in other companies diverted into separate units

By Anthony Barber in Frankfurt

Munich Re, the world's largest reinsurance group, has transferred DM60bn (£31.6bn, \$36bn) of shareholdings in other companies into separate units in what it describes as a drive to increase its flexibility in portfolio management and acquisitions.

German companies. Munich Re's stake in Allianz was worth DM36bn as of last June. Munich Re revealed in 1996 that its holdings also included small stakes in such German companies as the industrial group Siemens, the chemicals groups Bayer and Hoechst, and the Bavarian bank Veritasbank (now HypoVereinsbank) as well as Deutsche Bank.

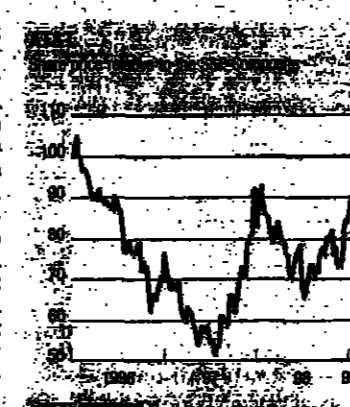
eight largest US bank. Dresdner said last Tuesday it had transferred DM25bn of its non-bank shareholdings before the end of last year. Analysts said one motive behind the actions of Deutsche, Dresdner and Munich Re appeared to be a calculation that such moves could help limit tax liabilities under the new tax regime of Germany's centre-left government.

Mitsukoshi to sell its stake in Tiffany

By Alexandra Nussbaum in Tokyo

Mitsukoshi, the troubled Japanese department store, is selling its stake in Tiffany & Co, the upmarket jeweller, it said yesterday. The move represents yet another retreat by Japanese companies that bought trophy assets in the US during the "bubble" period of the late 1980s and early 1990s.

THE LEX COLUMN Back-tracking



AT&T's decision not to establish a so-called tracking stock is a victory of common sense over financial engineering. In the wake of its \$36bn acquisition of cable group TCI, the tracking stock was intended to help investors by in effect splitting the telecommunications giant into a fast-growing but highly indebted residential company (including TCI) and a safer but duller business and infrastructure side.

would be a better bet. With interest cover at over seven times, RMC has scope for acquisitions. But does it have the culture? It may, in any case, have missed the boat in the US, where a big infrastructure spending programme has pushed up asset prices.

Regional brewers

Anyone who mis-spent his or her youth playing video games in Marston, Thompson & Evershed's pubs should be delighted by the UK regional brewer's revival of the "Pac-man" defence. The tactic of turning around and gobbling the monster chasing you was a briefly popular, if rarely successful, corporate finance play in the 1980s.

AT&T drops plans for tracker stock in TCI deal

By Richard Waters in New York

AT&T yesterday surprised Wall Street with a fundamental shift in the structure of its planned \$36bn (£30.8bn) purchase of TCI, a deal intended to provide the springboard for its attack on local telephone markets across the US.

all a higher stock market value. Yesterday, however, AT&T indicated that the complicated financial structure could have obstructed its efforts to merge its operations with those of TCI. The company has also been distracted by other deals, ranging from the acquisition of International Business Machines' communications network to a global joint venture with British Telecommunications.

various operations fully. That contrasts with moves by some other US telecom companies, including Sprint, to set up tracker stocks to reflect their newer, faster-growing operations. The decision to drop the tracking stock was supported by John Malone, the TCI chairman, and Leo Hindery, the company's president, AT&T said.

then no rival has been prepared to pay any premium for the group. BTR's shares are now 25 per cent above their, albeit dismal, pre-bid level, and investors know that they would quickly sink back were the merger to fail.

BTR/Siebe

Those romantic BTR shareholders who were hoping that a mysterious saviour would appear in time to save the engineer from a less-than-perfect marriage to Siebe look likely to be disappointed. The US and European controls and automation groups once tipped as potential counter-bidders have had almost three weeks to consider the merger documents, but have shown no sign of interest.

Shareholders in both companies must now lodge their proxy votes by Monday, in time for Wednesday's meetings. Philips & Drew has accepted Siebe's offer for BTR, one of the biggest and longest-running disappointments in its portfolio, and other BTR shareholders should follow suit.

RMC

It was not just communism that ended up under the rubble of the Berlin Wall. A decade on and RMC's German business, some 30 per cent of group sales, is a mess - more building site than building materials. The German construction boom, fuelled by tax breaks to smooth unification, was due a bust. RMC now knows about the pain of getting the cycle wrong: a like-for-like fall-off in concrete and aggregate volumes of 20 per cent in the second half of the year.

Table with 3 columns: Companies in this issue, Markets, and Latest. Lists various companies and their market performance.

Weather Europe today It will be very cold in the north-east and across Scandinavia, with snow showers and sub-zero temperatures. Rain in the north-west will spread south into central areas, turning to snow as it gets colder.

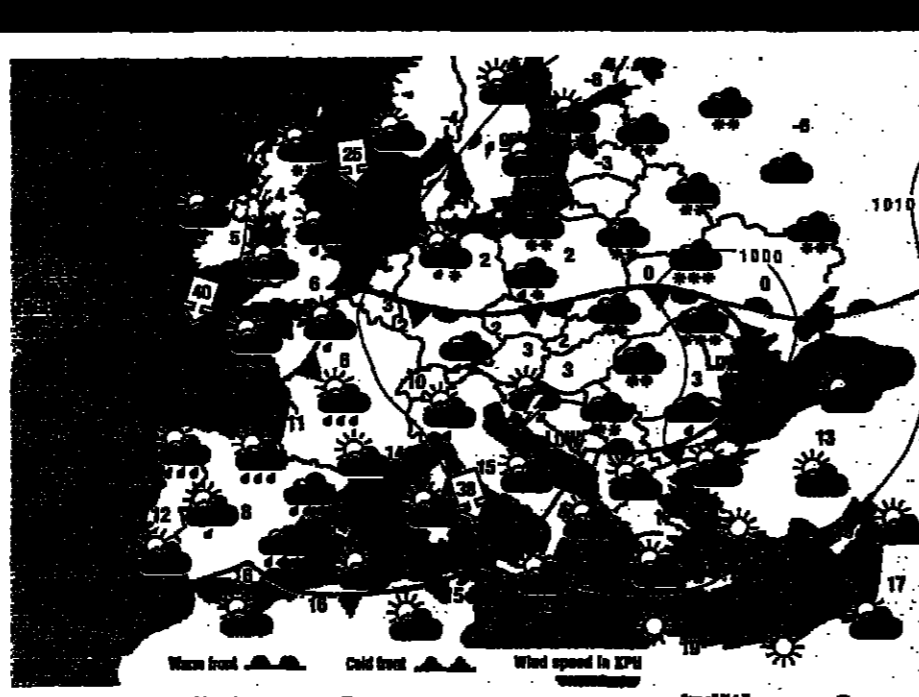


Table titled 'TODAY'S TEMPERATURES' and 'SITUATION AT MIDNIGHT' listing temperatures for various cities and weather conditions.

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FT

WEEKEND

JANUARY 9/JANUARY 10 1999



End Game

'The greatest variety of threats to human survival stems from our own technological prowess, and love of war'



Robber baron's gift

'Why did a man who spent his life ignoring public opinion leave his precious collection to the nation?'



Good grooming

'Artificial snow and sunshine cheered up skiers - many of whom seem content to ski Beaver Creek and Vail'

Page XII

Page V

Page XV

A watery grave for the truth

Nicholas Faith asks whether all the facts about the sinking of the Estonia will ever be known

Death was actually a very nice place to be, a warm place, a lovely escape from the hell that was living at the time."

That's how drifting in a water-logged life raft in the middle of the Baltic in late September 1994, surrounded by dead or dying fellow-passengers from the doomed ferry Estonia, struck Paul Barney, a young English landscape gardener.

Barney was one of the 137 survivors from the 989 aboard. The casualty list - over four times greater than the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster in 1987 - made it by far the worst peacetime tragedy to strike a European ship since the Titanic 82 years earlier, and the biggest disaster involving Swedish citizens for more than a century.

Over the past 50 years there have been many disasters involving ro-ro (roll-on, roll-off) ferries. In February 1953, the Princess Victoria, a British ferry, went down in a gale off the coast of Northern Ireland, drowning 139 of the 182 on board. The cause, the failure of the car deck's bow door, was the same as that in many later disasters.

And outside Europe there have been many worse tragedies, most notably in the Philippines, an archipelago of 7,000 islands which depend for transport on usually badly maintained, almost invariably overloaded ferries.

The worst recorded there was the Dona Paz, which sank in April 1986. The official death toll of 4,375 was a considerable understatement, since the ferry almost certainly carried up to 800 unrecorded passengers.

But, especially since the rules were tightened after the Herald of Free Enterprise disaster, somehow no one expects tragedies such as the Estonia to happen in Europe, particularly because it was sailing to a port in Sweden, supposedly the most safety-conscious of countries.

Yet, in this instance, the Swedish authorities, together with the Finns and Estonians who were also involved in the decision, are seeking to cover the wreck of the Estonia with a cement overcoat, saying that it would not be seemly to disturb the bodies of the victims still on board.

Although the survivors have raised enough concerns to lead to a delay in the (literal) cover-up, rocks and pebbles have already been

dumped round the wreck as preparation for the cement. If they are indeed followed by cement, as the authorities propose, this would leave unanswered for ever the vital question posed in a television documentary, directed by Jonathan Jones and Phillip Wearne, to be screened on Monday on Channel 4, and in a book** did the Estonia sink as a result of a design flaw, as an official report stated, or, as seems equally plausible, as a result of weaknesses in maintenance, inspection and certification procedures, as indicated by two subsequent reports?

The Estonia was no ordinary ro-ro ferry but a symbol of the freedom of the newly independent Baltic States and the flagship of the new Estonian merchant marine. It was therefore a politically sensitive vessel. Sweden and Estonia both became anxious to prevent blame for the tragedy falling on the fledgling Estonian government and to prevent a searchlight being thrown on the inspection and regulation procedures of any of the ferries operating under any flag in the Baltic.

The shock of the sinking appears to have taken the Swedish government by surprise, perhaps even causing an element of panic. This is the atmosphere in which the official inquiry was held. The Estonia's regular route between Tallinn, the capital of Estonia, and Stockholm provided the most direct maritime route from the former Soviet Union to the west - and thus attracted a wide mix of passengers, including, it was thought, not a few drug-runners and illegal immigrants. Inevitably, its loss sparked off some extraordinary rumours: that military-quality cobalt from the former Soviet Union was being carried on a couple of closely guarded trucks on board; or that the Russian Mafia had planted a bomb on board to warn the owners to pay protection money - but that the Mafia did not realise the ship was in such an appalling condition that the warning became a deadly weapon.

The ship sank in the early hours of September 27, only a few minutes after distress messages had caused rescue attempts to be launched from several Baltic ports.

Unfortunately, no one on the bridge survived, which provided further grist to the rumour mill. The official report by the Swedish, Estonian and Finnish governments blamed the

design of the ferry, in particular the ramp in front of the car deck and the visor which covered it.

The 55-ton visor, which bore the brunt of the force of the waves, was hinged at the top, and secured by hydraulic and manual locks on both sides with another - the "Atlantic lock" - on the centre line at the bottom. The report, published in December 1997, said the design of the visor meant that in waves as high as those encountered by the Estonia, it was certain to come loose.

Not surprisingly, Meyer Werft, the highly respected German company which built the Estonia, objected and set up its own independent commission of inquiry, the findings of which were published last year. Its conclusions were later largely validated by another investigation carried out by the International Transport Federation, which represents seamen worldwide.

The first objection raised by the two unofficial inquiries was to the membership of the official inquiry, which included the chairman of the company which owned the Estonia, as well as the official responsible for the safety of Estonian ships; these two Estonians were, in effect, investigating themselves.

Next, the later inquiries

There had been at least 10 other problems with broken locks or visors on Baltic ferries

found that the weather was not by any means as exceptional as the official inquiry had made out. They then noted the absence of collision bulkheads between the bow and car deck, which are meant to absorb the first impact of any collision. This resulted in the ramp being too close to the bow and lacking proper protection.

There were no collision bulkheads because the Estonia was not originally licensed to sail in open waters - only within 20 miles of the coast. But after it was transferred from Swedish to Estonian jurisdiction in 1992, in a gesture by the Swedes towards the

newly independent Baltic state, the Estonian authorities extended its licence to allow it to sail more than 20 miles from land.

Bureau Veritas, the French "classification society", responsible for certifying that the ship was safe, was either not told of the licence change, or, if it was told, let the change go through. It is unclear which, because of the society's role in acting for both the Estonian regulator and the Estonian owner of the vessel.

There had been at least 10 other cases of problems with broken locks or visors on Baltic ferries. Luckily, in all earlier cases, the crews had been able to reach port before any serious damage was done. An inspection of the Estonia's sister ship, the Diana 2, had revealed well before the disaster that it too had suffered from a failure of the lockings on one side - but no repairs were made because the Diana 2 was old.

But the biggest shock was the state of the Estonia's visor. In an article published in the Naval Architect magazine in April 1998, Nigel Ling, a maritime expert, reported that the bottom of the visor "is corroded - with 'tide marks' showing that the water had repeatedly got into the space between the ramp and the visor."

"There were witnesses prepared to testify that when the ship was entering sheltered waters, on other trips, water could be seen streaming out of the visor joint" - a point confirmed by the ship's inspector.

The German inquiry found the hinges were weak and

the Atlantic lock could no longer be operated hydraulically but had to be hammered open and shut. Ling wrote that one Swedish seaman "had carried out repairs to the Atlantic lock in a manner that can perhaps best be described as imaginative."

Yet the official inquiry allowed the Atlantic lock, an obviously vital clue to the cause of the catastrophe, to be thrown back into the sea after it had been recovered because, it claimed, it was too heavy to be transported by helicopter.

The German inquiry concluded that the ship was not only being sailed in seas far rougher than the relatively calm waters for which it had been designed, but that it had been appallingly badly maintained. The crew had complained on numerous occasions, and when the ship was docked for its annual inspection in 1998 had asked for the locks on both ramp and visor to be reinforced - items included in the original estimate for repair work but struck out later.

As Captain Werner Hummel, a senior German investigator, put it: "The whole bow ramp was severely misaligned so it did not close... and the misalignment was so extensive that the locking bolts didn't fit any more at the port side, only at the starboard side."

The "German theory" is that the ship suffered a so-called unexplained shock on the starboard side which allowed water into its lower part, below the car deck; this led to a list from which it soon recovered. However, the the-

ory is that this shock caused the bow door and visor to come loose and fall off some minutes later, at which point there was flooding of the car deck and almost immediate sinking.

This theory would explain the gap of half an hour between the initial impact and the sinking, as well as the fact that the visor was not found where it would have been had it dropped off some time before the ship sank as the official inquiry had claimed.

The Estonia now lies in relatively shallow water and could easily be raised and inspected to find out where the damage really did start.

Yet the governments involved want to transform the Estonia into an underwater sarcophagus. This idea was not raised until after the inquiry had been under way for some time, which perhaps suggests that the investigation was uncovering potentially damaging aspects of the story.

What is certain is that the evidence is sketchy. Even a video recording of the starboard side of the ship, which could have shown whether the German theory was correct, was inexplicably lost.

If the authorities do concede over the wreck, it could smother one of the greatest incentives to examine and, if required, overhaul maintenance and inspection regimes which could be allowing other ferries in a similar condition to the Estonia to continue to ply routes in the Baltic.

Nevertheless, the Swedes seem set on a course of

declaring the wreck "a national grave which must not be disturbed". If they succeed, the grave will house not only the bodies of the victims but also the country's reputation as a

paragon of scrupulous attention to public safety. *Mayday: Lost at Sea, Channel 4 January 11, 9pm. **Mayday, The Perils of the Waves, by Nicholas Faith, Channel 4 Books, £14.99.



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Ethics Today
Fat new friends
'The sensible rule is that good government properly distances itself from all interest groups'
Page III

NEXT WEEK
Pack your bags
A world of choice: plan an escape with the help of our 12-page focus on travel
With FT Weekend

PERSPECTIVES

The Nature of Things

A mysterious repulsion is blowing us all apart

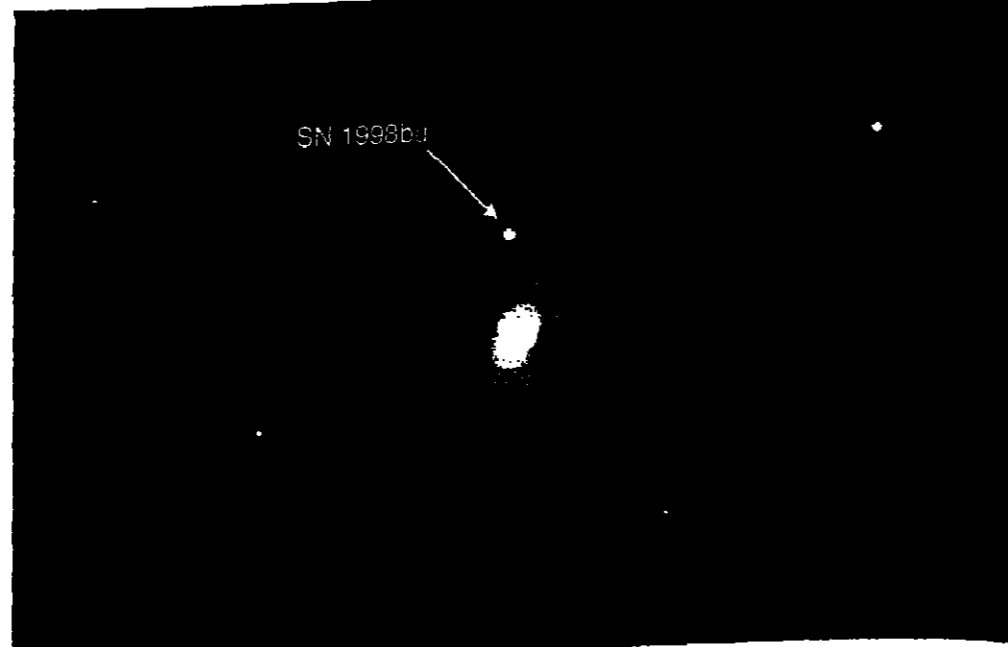
Clive Cookson reports on a sensational development in cosmology

Albert Einstein proposed in 1917 that a repulsive force pervaded empty space and prevented the universe collapsing under its own gravity.

breaking effect of gravity and pushing the universe apart at an ever increasing rate. If this is confirmed, it will be the most sensational development in cosmology for many years.

By comparing the distance of the supernovae with their "red-shifts" - the speed at which they are moving away from us - it is possible to calculate how fast the universe was expanding at different points in the past.

but this is such an unexpected discovery that we'll keep looking for any loopholes. Meanwhile theoretical physicists are trying to come up with an explanation for the cosmic repulsion.



Supernova 1998bu, a violent stellar explosion on the edge of a spiral galaxy, observed from Chile

mass/energy, with lambda accounting for 70 per cent. For the past few years, astronomers have been looking for the universe's "missing mass" or "dark matter", because what they observe through telescopes and other instruments accounts for only a small fraction of what must actually be present.

According to this theory, space is far from empty even if it contains no conventional matter. On the smallest possible scales of distance and time - a billion billion billion times less than our everyday world - it is seething with "virtual particles" that appear and then vanish again.

on for any other explanations. Whatever mechanism lies behind Einstein's cosmological constant, its existence would seal the argument about the ultimate fate of the universe. There appears now to be no way in which everything can come back together in a Big Crunch.

Demand for craftsman-built fishing boats waxes and wanes with the numbers of salmon on the Tay. Peter Rolt reports



John Ferguson: 'I must be doing myself out of a job because cobbles are only expected to last about 10 years'

At the age of 60, when most other people have thoughts of retirement, John Ferguson is happily building the traditional wooden boats used by salmon fishermen on the River Tay in Perthshire.

For most of their married life, Ferguson and his wife have lived in a two-bedroom council house on the outskirts of Perth, Scotland. Twenty years ago, when his daughters had left home, he decided to risk taking up the craft for which he had trained in his teens.

but used all his savings to get started. "While I was working as a carpenter I was paying into a Save As You Earn scheme, which meant I had £2,000 to spend on second-hand machinery, such as a planer/thickener, a circular saw and a hand saw."

Minding Your Own Business Going with the flow

The owners of fishing rights - private companies and hotels as well as estates, large and small - employ gillie/boatmen who take fishermen and women out on their stretch of the river in boats which have evolved specifically for this purpose.

come from the world over and the boats are in constant use six days a week throughout the season - January 15 to October 15. Soon repair work overtook loch boat building so he took measurements from an old cobbie lying on the river bank and began to build one from scratch.

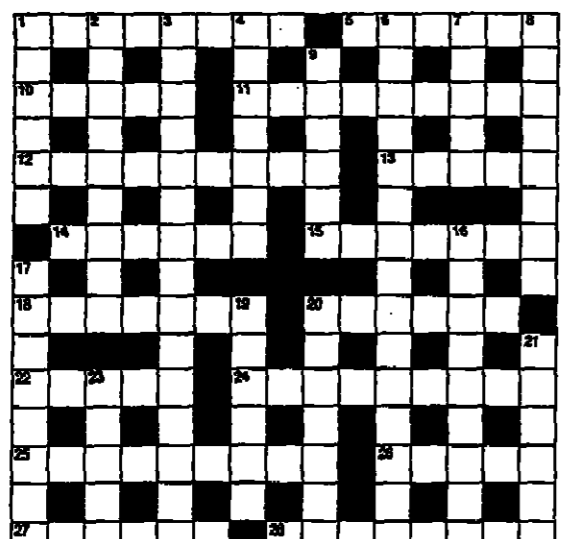
estates. The business built up gradually to a peak in 1995, when he was working seven days a week with a turnover of £26,000. Since then, however, orders have tailed off. Although the Tay is still one of the most prestigious salmon fishing rivers in Scotland, there has been a worrying decline in numbers of salmon.

salmon fishing to help stocks regenerate. If the stocks continue to decline, a whole network of people will suffer - owners of fishing rights, hoteliers and their staff and the gillie/boatmen. John Ferguson is among the hundreds who are anxiously watching developments.

ally built of larch planks on oak frames; their most distinctive feature is that they are built without a keel which would snag in shallow parts of the fast-flowing river. They are left long and with a draught of only 6in to 8in, highly manoeuvrable even with three people in them.

CROSSWORD

No. 9,883 Set by CINEPHILE. The prize of a matching set of finely engraved personalised notepaper, envelopes and correspondence cards on Ezeru Kid Finish Paper from Crane & Co will be awarded for the first three correct solutions opened. Solutions by Wednesday January 20, marked Crossword 9,883 on the envelope, to the Financial Times, Number One Southwark Bridge, London SE1 8UL. Solution on Saturday January 23.



- ACROSS 1 Troops disposed of - that's on the line (8) 2 Friend outside one inside - musically it's not authentic (8) 3 Pictorial puzzle concerning transport (5) 4 Collier's cry where tennis is played by the pumps? (8) 5 Eccentric directors without substance (9) 6 Shrine to change, we hear (5) 7 Fruit tree - it's confused with corn (6) 8 Conveyance in which I've been taken off having an object (7) 9 First (unless first's second) (7) 10 Celts might surround a fortress (6) 11 More in context, radically speaking (5) 12 Manifestation of headless spectre à la ghost? (9) 13 Precursor of marriage in France? (9) 14 Clarification? You cannot be serious! (6) 15 Neat with needles (6) 16 One little boy in a row gets a rabe (9) 17 Conferring of priesthood in a submarine is defiance of authority (15) 18 Don't say it again? (7) 19 Want a flower, keeping one to name without enthusiasm (16) 20 Note what the smallest pig says? (5) 21 Student - say it again - can read (8) 22 Believe you've got it coming? (6) 23 Musical exercise for one, including odd little figure, for example (9) 24 Not having a child, a little boy performed - marvellous! (8) 25 Mount a loss in the matter of a tree (8) 26 What the chiropodist 'as to do, inversely, about part of the eye? (7) 27 Agree where to sit (6) 28 Flower border after 'Tuesday's opening (6)

Solution 9,882. LAMPPOST CRISIS... THE ANSWERS TO THE CROSSWORD PUZZLE.

BRIDGE

As the most important invitation event of the bridge calendar - the Macallan International Pairs - approaches, Zia Mahmood is once again peaking at just the right moment. This time, playing with Howard Weinstein, he scooped the Blue Ribbon Pairs, one of the top events on the US circuit.

CHESS

Many of the UK's best chess players, past and present, have been Oxfordbridge graduates, so last month's Oxford International, for which a local patron donated £10,000 prize money, was an important and a welcome venture. Cambridge University stages an open-to-all weekend congress on February 6-7 (details from Sam Essen on 01223-609787).

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Nobel vo... speaks ou... the wretc... of the ea... Naive faith in... Labour

Handwritten Arabic text: صدى من الامل

PERSPECTIVES

Conversations with the FT Nobel voice speaks out for the wretched of the earth

José Saramago refuses to allow his powerful moral concerns to be muffled, says Peter Wise.

José Saramago, the Portuguese novelist awarded the 1998 Nobel prize for literature, wants to stop the world for 50 years. At 76, he is not anxious to leave, nor, as an ardent communist, is he averse to progress. He simply suggests a pause so that humanity can try to find a better balance.

"We should be able to find the courage to say that the stage of development we have reached in the west is good enough for now," he said during a recent visit to Lisbon. "Let us devote all our energies for half a century to helping the millions of people who have been left behind to catch up."

Single striking ideas such as this are at the heart of almost all Saramago's works, engaging the reader with powerful moral questions and disquieting ironies. "Each of my novels and plays is built around a strong idea. When I start writing, I know exactly where I am going."

Blindness (Harvill Press, £9.99), his latest work to be published in English, is an unsettling allegory in which an inexplicable plague deprives every human, except for one woman, of sight. A blindness to reason, Saramago believes, has produced an absurd world in which the suffering of the poor is ignored by rich nations pursuing ever greater wealth.

"Is it not absurd that the US dispatches a spaceship to bring back rocks from Mars, but sends only three or four helicopters when a natural disaster strikes Central America?" he asks. "Is a world in which fewer than 300 people own as much as the poorest 40 per cent a great achievement?"

The questions that Saramago poses in his writing are equally discomfiting, and some have sought to muffle his disturbing voice. In 1982, an official in the then conservative government of Portugal excluded his novel, *The Gospel According to Jesus Christ*, from consideration for the European Fiction Award. The book, in which a troubled Jesus questions his role, was consid-

ered offensive to Roman Catholics. In response, Saramago moved to Lanzarote in the Spanish Canary Islands, where he lives "in exile", as he only half-mockingly describes it, with his second wife, Pilar del Rio, a Spanish journalist.

"I left Portugal because an act of censorship was committed against one of my books by specific individuals and a particular government. I did not feel at ease," he says. "But that hasn't affected my relationship with Portugal. This is my country, my language, my history. Wherever I am, Portugal is there with me."

Let us devote all our energies for half a century to helping the millions who have been left behind'

Saramago's most widely read novel, *Baltasar and Blimunda* (1982), recounts the building of an 18th century convent in Madra, just north of Lisbon. But Saramago has not been afforded the slightest distinction by the municipal council for bringing international attention to the small town.

The book, the conservative mayor said, "in no way dignifies, but on the contrary, belittles Madra in the same way that it belittles the history of our country". Eventually, when Saramago became a Nobel laureate, the Socialist government renamed the local secondary school in his honour.

Saramago's political views do not make him an easy figure for upholders of the status quo to embrace. At the glittering Nobel award ceremony in Stockholm last month, he used his acceptance speech to denounce governments and big business for failing to protect human rights. Multinational companies rule the world, he

told an audience brimming with cabinet ministers and business leaders, and have reduced what remained of the democratic ideal almost to nothing.

Despite differences with the leadership, he has belonged to the hard-line, unreformed Portuguese Communist party since 1969 and remains a committed Marxist.

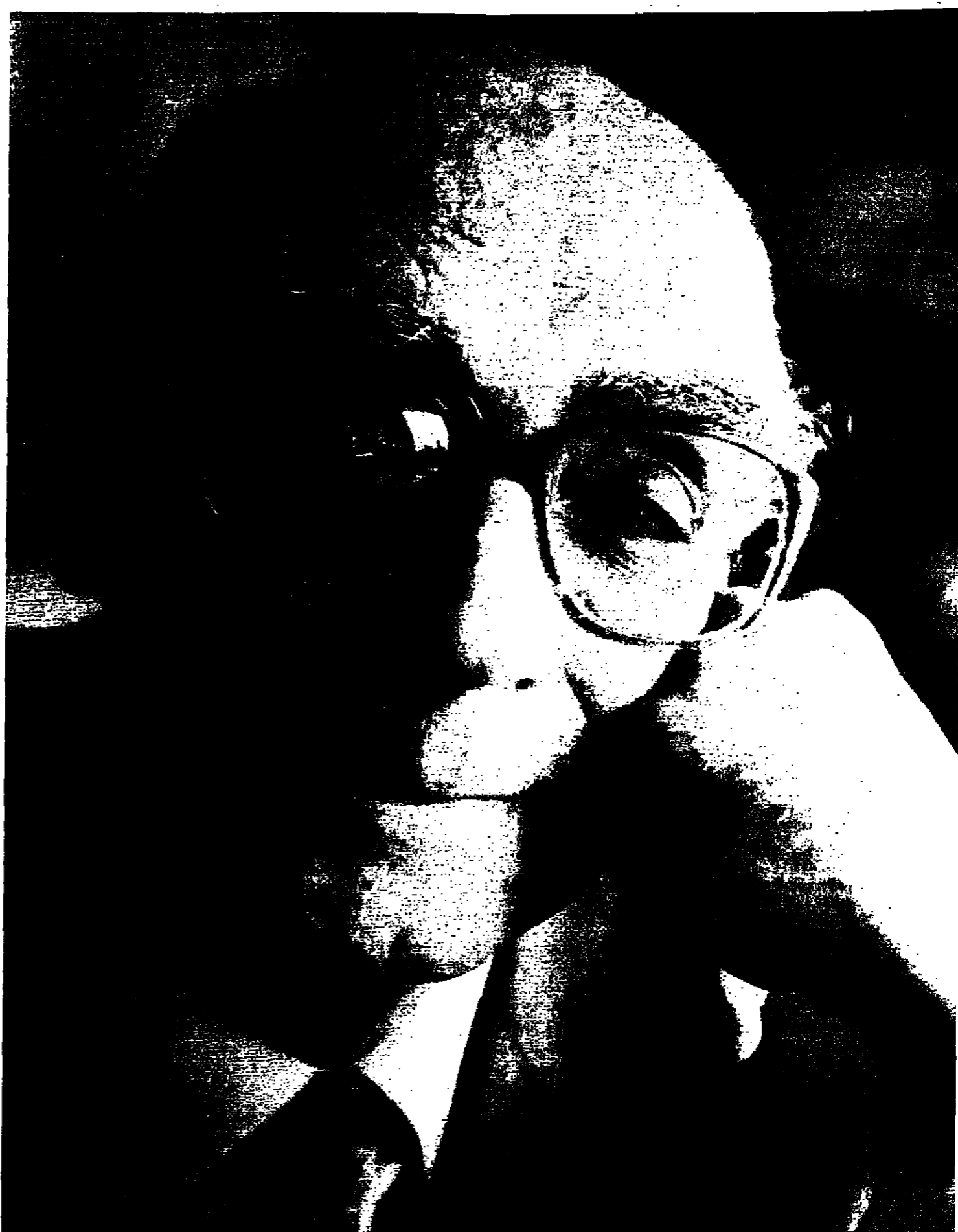
"In spite of the errors and the crimes committed by communist regimes, I continue to believe deeply in the basic virtues of human solidarity and respect for others. A time will come when people will reconsider the doctrines that have today fallen into disrepute. There will be new interpretations and new experiences. We will have to be careful not to make the same mistakes," he says.

"There will always be people who criticise me for ideological reasons or because they are, let us use the word, envious. But the attacks on me are insignificant compared with the enthusiasm that has greeted the Nobel award. What matters to me are the ordinary people, some of whom can't even read, who come up and say 'Thank you'."

Saramago is himself of humble origins. His family moved from a small village to Lisbon when he was two. He worked as a mechanic, studied at night, and later became a translator and a journalist. Apart from an unsuccessful novel published in his youth, his first work of fiction, *A Manual of Painting and Calligraphy*, was not published until 1977, when he was 54, and earned only minor recognition.

Baltasar and Blimunda, which established his international reputation, came out in 1982. It sets a touching love affair between a disabled ex-soldier and a clairvoyant girl, who can see only in the dark, against the cruelty and greed of church and state. "If I had died when I was 60, I would have written nothing. The young should realise that we old people also have valuable work to contribute."

The practical obligations of the Nobel prize have inter-



José Saramago: 'Is a world in which fewer than 300 people own as much as the poorest 40 per cent a great achievement?'

Derek Gurnham/PA

rupted Saramago's work on a novel to be called *The Cereza*, partly a modern interpretation of Plato. "I haven't written a line since the award was announced in October." Otherwise the distinction, which brings with it the sum of \$87,600 (£576,000), will not change him a jot, he insists.

However, as the first writer in Portuguese to receive a Nobel prize, he does feel a responsibility to his language and the literature it has produced. "Through me, the eyes of the

world will be drawn to authors writing in Portuguese in Brazil, Mozambique, Angola, Portugal and other countries."

The award is seen as a long overdue recognition of the riches of 20th century writing in Portuguese, the world's seventh most widely spoken language.

Giovanni Pontiero, the late translator of most of Saramago's works into English, has testified to his extreme concern with language.

"Portuguese, like Spanish, tends to be a verbose lan-

guage, generous and flamboyant, rich in emotions," Pontiero wrote, but sometimes rendered by these characteristics "conceptually woolly and inexact".

Saramago, he said, finds words "exasperatingly perverse" but "shines among a new generation of Portuguese writers who convey unusual insights without any loss of

clarity or precision. "I give the same attention to language as any craftsman gives to his tools," says Saramago. "No one can achieve mastery of all the words that exist. But the more I enrich my vocabulary, the better I can express, with greater precision and greater subtlety, what I have to say."

This has led to a concern

about what effect the impoverishment of language might have on thought and feeling. "In the field of emotions, one of the words least used today, at least in Portugal, is 'love'," he says. "People say 'I like you' or 'I'm fond of you' and the young have their own expressions. But if we lose the words, may we not also lose the feelings and emotions they represent?"

Ethics Today

Naïve faith in fat new friends

By cosyng up to business, Labour risks a scandal of real substance, says Joe Rogaly



You may not believe this, but certain ministers in Britain's New Labour government are vain, ambitious, devious and even ambitious. Some of them whisper critical remarks about their colleagues. These noble administrators have aides who support them, occasionally by telling fairy tales about their rivals.

As we know, such reprehensible behaviour is never observed in other countries. French, German, and American politicians all abide scrupulously by the rules of fair play. No thought of seeking advantage over their colleagues ever passes through their pristine minds. There is no scramble up and down the greasy pole in Paris, Bonn, Washington, Rome, Madrid, New Delhi...

Full the other one, you say. Seekers after office are the same everywhere. They lie and cheat when they have to, protest their innocence when found out. Straightening my face, I agree. The midwinter holiday season headlines in the British press tell us merely that Britain's Labour ministers are politicians.

Yet Tony Blair seems worried. He need not bite his

nails for long. Like other meaningless fusses got up by the media on both sides of the Atlantic this one will doubtless be shrugged off by most voters. Their minds are not focused on ordinary political in-fighting.

There are more serious matters upon which the prime minister might reflect as he returns to his desk this week. The one that holds the greatest potential for further trouble for New Labour is the relationship of his government with business. It is too close. The converts from socialism are displaying a naïve faith in their fat new friends. There have been casualties already. Unless he is careful Mr Blair himself will eventually be hurt.

This is not an anti-capitalist bleat. It is simply an affirmation of the sensible rule that good government properly distances itself from all interest groups. This should apply to every polity, including the US and the social democracies of continental Europe.

Admittedly, not every one of them is perfect, but that is beside the point. In Britain the lesson is yet to be learned. A touch of history should do the trick. Like other parties of the left, Labour was once closely entangled with the trade unions. I can remember a time when ministers

in the Wilson and Callaghan governments asked union leaders for their permission before making important decisions.

The result was disaster. Labour lost office in 1979, thrown out for its association with the chaos caused by dependence on the workers' representatives. It did not come back until 1997.

By that time its young new leader had determined to make New Labour a

Companies serve their shareholders, governments serve everybody

party of business, like the Democrats in the US.

Mr Blair was quite right. His party needed repositioning. It could not hope to win if it remained hostile to private enterprise. A dynamic economy could not function well unless the government remained conscious of the need for a business-friendly environment.

This meant keeping taxes low, minimising regulation, and checking all new legislation for its effect on investment and profitability. It also meant the aban-

donment of Old Labour rhetoric - for example, less mumbling about the "obscenity" of profits.

So far, so reasonable. New Labour has, however, done more than that. It has fostered public-private partnerships, deals that bring in capital against guaranteed future income streams. Prominent businessmen have been invited to join the government.

Companies have been tapped for sponsorship of favoured projects, such as the millennium dome, that vast, empty marquee dedicated to the servants of Mammon. Meanwhile, ministers stand ready to take calls from business chiefs, as they once did from trade union leaders.

There is nothing wrong with any single item in the above list. Put it all together, however, and you have a minefield. Companies enter into partnerships with the public sector to make money. That is their primary job.

When this spare executive chairman serves the administration he or she hopes at the very least to make useful contacts. Sponsors do not sponsor out of the goodness of their hearts. Calls are not made on top officials merely to pass the time of day.

It is plain that the chances of something going

wrong, of a huge scandal coming out of nowhere, are high. The prime minister could minimise the danger by a further, slight, adjustment of New Labour's position. He might achieve this by writing a short statement on the cabinet room flip-chart. "Companies serve their shareholders, governments serve everybody", it would proclaim.

Excuse me for a moment while I climb on my hobby-horse. To my mind the overriding success of the free market puts large companies in a position of such overwhelming power that we as citizens, not to mention consumers, need protection. This could be provided by the countervailing force of campaigning organisations like Friends of the Earth.

Likewise, governments are there to defend the public, not any particular part of it, whether that segment be organised labour or big corporations. Holding the ring for the market, maintaining the rule of law to enable business to function, trying to provide a stable economic background for manufacturers and traders, are all part of that task.

It should, however, be carried out at arm's length, eyes wide open. Unless it is, Mr Blair is at risk of waking up to headlines he will wish had never been thought of.

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PERSPECTIVES

Twice-dead poet of the Russian revolution still awaits a rebirth

Vladimir Mayakovsky died in the service of communism. Paul Neuburg argues for a recognition of his greatness

Vladimir Mayakovsky, arguably the greatest revolutionary poet of the 20th century, died twice. Following his second death, while turning in his grave, he was more alive to the people of his country than he had ever been before his first. And the way they feel about him now could spell his third demise.

Mayakovsky committed suicide in 1930. Self-murder had featured several times in his conversation and in poems going back to 1916. But just when it actually happened is all-important. "You may say that his suicide was one of those rare acts of definition in history, which strips clean a whole era, and lays open the future mercilessly," says Patricia Blake, associate of the Harvard Russian Studies Centre, and editor of a collection of Mayakovsky's translated verse and his satirical play, *The Bedbug*.

Self-murder had featured several times in his conversation and in poems going back to 1916

"There was a poet who had tried to place his supremely individual gifts at the service of a collective society, and he now lay with a bullet through his heart." The crisis that entrapped Mayakovsky in fact sprang from the issue at the heart of the whole history of communism and the arts. This concerned the realisation of its key aim, which was to reshape people's minds so they would join in reshaping the world.

But trying to pull this off turned out to demand, in the first place, a particular shaping or reshaping of the artistic style and agendas and sometimes egos of the writers and artists involved. The drama of this process took the form in 1920s Russia of a fierce struggle between the Communist avant-garde and the so-called proletarian groups of writers and artists.

work for the Russian Telegraph Agency on agitational posters and poems, which he designed and wrote for the next three years. This was followed by a period of doing the same kind of work for state enterprises, battling for customers in the free retail market born of Lenin's New Economic Policy. Typical was the verse, with a punchline he used in all his advertisements for the state grocery concern, *Moselproim*, which read: "Cooking oil! Attention working masses! Three times cheaper than butter! More nutritious than other oils! Nowhere else as at *Moselproim*."

Writing in 1918 to the journal of the Commissariat of Education, run by Mayakovsky and the Futurists, Marc Chagall, then commissar of culture in Vitebsk, complained that when he had local futurist painters decorate the city with their work for the first anniversary of the revolution, the response from workers was: "What's this? Please explain. Is this art?"

The proletarians - whose name sprang not from their origins but from their professed aim to create a new art that served the working class - laid stress on an accessible style that drew on the Russian tradition. And cultivating themes close to the experience of their intended audience, they thrived.

Among the avant-garde, it was Mayakovsky, originally a magnificent lyric poet much valued by his contemporaries, who sought above all to break through to the masses by radical shifts in the style, content and range of his work.

In 1919, he published *150,000,000*, a poem on the civil war in the tradition of a Russian folk epic and considered among his finest post-revolutionary works, not just anonymously, but with the opening lines naming the Russian people - the hero in the title - as also the author.

The same year, he went to revolution precipitated by the launching in 1928 of Stalin's breakneck industrialisation campaign, the leaders of RAPP, the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers, felt empowered to act as the party's bully boys to proletarianise not just literature, but its creators.

"The reconstruction of society was to be accompanied by a reconstruction of writers themselves," says David Shepherd, professor of Russian at Sheffield University, and co-editor of *Russian Cultural Studies*. "The word used was *perestroika*, wheeled out at various times in Russia to indicate a restructuring of society, or a restructuring of its individuals."

It was this restructuring by RAPP that Mayakovsky managed to bring on himself, by writing two brilliant satirical plays that proved red rags to the organisation, and then trying to make peace with its leaders.

His sense of the value of the sacrifice he had made for communism remained unshaken. "I subdued myself, setting my heel on the throat of my own song," he wrote in 1930 in what was to be an introduction to a long ode to the Five Year Plan. "Listen, comrade of posterity! to the agitator, to the rable-rouser... I'll join you! In the far communist future."

But when, in February 1930, Mayakovsky applied to join RAPP, thereby isolating himself from his avant-garde friends, he found its leadership hold was, in effect, a trial over his intentions. He then faced a deeply humiliating series of meetings aimed at his re-education. The process was not yet complete when, on April 14 1930 in his office in central Moscow, he pointed a gun at himself and pulled the trigger.

"He was a rebel, an iconoclast. He would surely not have survived the 1930s," says Patricia Blake. "He may have had some presentiment of that, and in that sense you can say that he took his execution into his own hands."

But that was not the end of Mayakovsky's reconstruction. In December 1935, after Nikolai Bukharin, the Bolshevik luminary heading for an ugly end in the 1937 show trials, had made some cautionary remarks about Mayakovsky's stature, Stalin issued a statement that was given front-page treatment in the Soviet press. It said: "Mayakovsky was and remains the best and most talented poet of our Soviet epoch. Indifference to his memory and his work is a crime."

A year after the first arrests of Stalin's Great Terror, this set off a canonisation such as no other

poet in history has enjoyed. A square in Moscow and a Metro station then being built were named after Mayakovsky, with his prophetic statue to dominate the first and his huge head the second, followed by streets and squares across the land, as well as locomotives, tractors, tanks and a minesweeper, and Pioneer, Komsomol and shockworker brigades, while his communist poems took pride of place in the educational canon and in the repertoire of school and enterprise celebrations.

Boris Pasternak who, while rejecting his political poetry, had been a good friend of Mayakovsky and spoke of his lyric verse as "poetry moulded by a master, proud and demonic and at the same time infinitely doomed," called this process the poet's second death.

But the rebel returned. In the late 1950s, crowds of young Russians began to congregate at the

foot of his statue in Mayakovsky Square, and recite his poetry as songs of protest.

"Out of all the officially approved classics, he was the only one different," says Andrei Zorin, Moscow critic, and chairman of the 1996 Russian Booker Prize judges. "But literature was

provoked, is the indifference which surrounds him now. "Mayakovsky, as well as his heirs like Yevtushenko, are out of fashion," says Zorin. "Their whole tradition now seems artificial."

That could bury Mayakovsky as the embodiment of the spirit of the communist revolution, a third time. But perhaps, when the political encrustations have all fallen away, Mayakovsky, the lyricist celebrated by Pasternak and other contemporaries, will come back to life again. There's reason to believe he could.

"I recently taught a course on Russian literature at Stanford, and had to include Mayakovsky," recalls Zorin. "So I had to read him, which I hadn't done for many years. I was astonished at what a good poet he was."

Paul Neuburg is presenter of *The Red Flag and The Red Mask*, a series on communism and the arts starting at 8.15pm on Monday on BBC Radio 3.



Battling for the communist customer: Vladimir Mayakovsky, in two 1924 portraits, with examples of his copy for the state grocery concern, Moselproim, advertising cigarettes, top and bottom, and for a Moselproim cafeteria, centre

By the 1980s Mayakovsky seemed the troubadour of a disaster for Russia

Then also very much a political matter, the only means of expressing opposition. And in politics, after Stalin's death in 1953 and his denunciation by Khrushchev in 1956, the

writer should choose to write US detective fiction. But Connolly says it is part of a well-established tradition. "You've got people like John Ford, who was to all intents and purposes Irish, creating this myth of a [American] West he had never seen. Throughout Hollywood history, you have these emigré European directors coming in creating these wonderful visions of Americana."

Connolly jokes now that he had to turn to the *Writers and Artists Year Book* for advice on how to get a publisher. He first submitted sample chapters to 30 literary agents and publishing houses. He was flatly rejected by six publishers. One even added a hand-written note at the bottom of the rejection slip pointing out why the novel was so bad. A year later, the same publisher was bidding along with others at auction for the completed work.

Metaphysics amid the mayhem

John Murray Brown on an Irish journalist's non-Irish thriller which has all of Dublin talking

"Bird" Parker, a New York police officer, who comes home after a drinking binge to find his wife and daughter brutally murdered. Wracked by guilt, he leaves the force and sets out to track down the killer, a search that pits him against organised crime bosses and takes him to the murky underworld of steamy Louisiana.

Connolly writes fluently. He is irritated by suggestions the book lacks lyricism. "I think there are plenty of solid lyrical patches, which distinguishes it from American writing, which tends to be more spare in its style."

He acquired a taste for the genre after attending classes in experimental crime writing when he was at Trinity College, Dublin. The literary references - to the English metaphysical poets, and Elizabethan revenge tragedies - are also borrowed from his days as an English literature undergraduate.



John Connolly: as for the killer's gruesome methods, "What you see is the aftermath of violence. I never describe crimes being committed"

Times job. He filled dozens of notebooks with snippets of dialogue caught on buses or in bars. On other occasions, the ideas were recorded on whatever was to hand - a zoo ticket or a torn-out page of a telephone directory.

As a journalist you're used to going in in the morning and not knowing anything about a subject, and looking intelligent the following morning when it appears in the paper. It's been said that one of the great curses

of a young writer is that you write what you know. But actually if you do enough research you can know about anything.

He became an expert on US firearms, on policing, and on the flora of the Louisiana swamps. Authenticity - not so much plausibility - is the work's hallmark. Researching a setting, he would try to find someone who knew what the town was like when his character was growing up.

"It's something you can't get from a book. You have to find someone who was there at the time, who can tell you what stores there were, when this bar was built, when this church burnt down." Connolly adds: "You should always write for the one or two people who would be able to spot your mistakes."

Completing the manuscript was a sort of endurance test at first. "It was conceived as something that I wanted to do for myself. For two years it was just something I did in the evenings to amuse myself."

The story opens with Charlie

صكرا من الاصل



BOOKS

The robber baron's gift

Why did coke king Henry Frick leave his art collection to the US nation? asks Richard Lambert

His portrait hangs in pride of place among his matchless collection of pictures. Painted some time after his death, it shows a gentle, courteous man, with a kindly expression and a well-trimmed beard. He stands a little hunched, looking rather diffident, even vulnerable. This is the same Henry Frick of whom a business partner wrote: "He was a thinking machine, methodical as a comptometer, accurate, cutting straight to the point... He had no friends and was a very unhappy man... was cold blooded, ignorant of everything except the steel and coke business... was cold and austere and unlovable even in his family; ruthless, dominating, icy."

There are two great questions about Henry Frick. How was it that a man who was regarded like this by even his closest associates came to build an art collection that is universally loved? And why did a man who spent his life ignoring public opinion leave his precious collection to the nation

in that great public building on New York's Fifth Avenue?

A new biography by a great granddaughter, Martha Frick Symington Sanger, attempts to provide some of the answers. Drawing on family memories and private diaries and letters, she provides what is certainly a fresh perspective on a man who in most respects was one of the least attractive of America's late-19th century robber barons. Two main themes run through her story, one more persuasive than the other.

The first is that Frick's personal life was darkened beyond measure by the tragic and lingering death of a beloved young daughter. Poignant recollections of the child recur right through to his own final days. Sanger's second idea is that Frick's love of his paintings can be explained in terms of his memories and dreams. Almost all of them, she suggests, carry references to his own experiences, whether in similarities to the lost child, general family likenesses, favourite pets - just about anything.

Neither of these themes,

however, are much help in answering the big questions about Frick. There was, after all, precious little joy in his life even before the death of the infant Martha in 1891. Born in modest circumstances in 1849, Frick had fought his way to immense wealth in the toughest of industries - coke and steel - by the time he was little more than 30. He had already earned himself the reputation as the most brutal of strike breakers: his company's security thugs were, it was widely believed, issued with "shoot to kill" orders against rioters in 1899, and there was nothing out of character in the incident that was to earn him national notoriety, the Homestead battle of 1892.

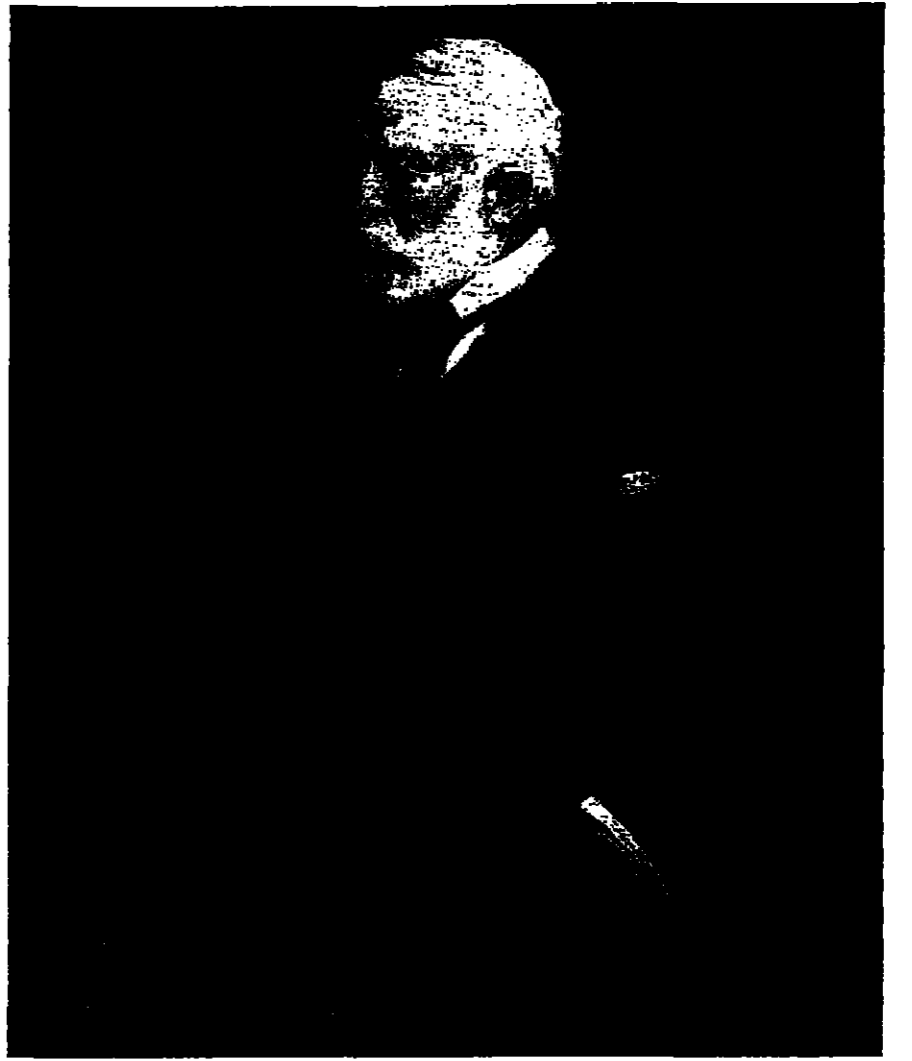
On that occasion, Frick sent in 300 armed Pinkertons against the disaffected work-

force: three of them died, along with seven strikers. Order was eventually restored with the help of 8,500 members of the Pennsylvania state militia.

Some of Sanger's theories about what Frick saw in his paintings are hard to treat seriously. Take as an example one of the greatest works of the collection, Rembrandt's "The Polish Rider". Not only does it apparently contain many references to early days in the coke industry and to Frick's interests as a Mason. We are also asked to believe that the rider himself is a dead ringer for another of his daughters, Helen. Fortunately, the book is beautifully produced, and contains more than enough gorgeous reproductions to compensate for these trials.

Sanger skims over how the paintings were acquired, and the extent to which Frick was influenced by others in his choices. She claims that he never liked the dealer, Joseph Duveen, and was so suspicious of him that he always had a secretary present to record every word of their meetings.

This seems rather improbable, given the degree to



Cold, austere businessman with precious little joy in his life except his love of paintings: Henry Frick

Without the music, the Master is lost

Clement Crisp argues that a compilation of the lyrics of Noël Coward is a self-defeating exercise

Years ago I was leaving a theatre just behind Noël Coward. As he passed by, a theatrical lady darted forward and gasped "Good evening, Master". I half expected Coward to turn round and tell her that her faith had made her whole.

That Coward was a brilliantly gifted man of the theatre can never be in doubt, and the 100th anniversary of his birth will provide a proper occasion to place his several talents in perspective. But I am not persuaded that the lustre that surrounds his name - so eagerly burnished by Cowardolaters who run the cottage industry that still flourishes in books and television programmes about him - can ever justify turning what was once a light-hearted tribute to his manifold abilities into a serious title.

Assembling what is, we are led to believe, the almost complete collection of his song lyrics is just one manifestation of this curious obsession. Barry Day has trawled theatre collections and delved deep in archives to find the least little lyric as well as the great hits. His book is handsomely designed, amusingly illustrated with photographs and drawings and pages of Coward manuscripts, from the earliest theatrical years (circa 1912) up to the last iconic images (Coward and Marlene Dietrich leaving a theatre and looking like glamorous tortoiseshells).

His first lyrics date from 1916, and include the

unlikely "Baseball Rag", set to music by the repetitively named Doris Doris. His final verses were for a Broadway version of *Blithe Spirit* in 1964, a decade before his death. In the half-century that intervened he wrote some of the most beguiling and haunting of popular songs, and provided lyrics that, in a few and extraordinary cases, have entered the language and consciousness of our society. ("Mad Dogs and Englishmen" is probably the supreme example.)

NOËL COWARD: THE COMPLETE LYRICS
Edited by Barry Day
Methuen £30, 352 pages

haunting "Never Again") takes the lyric onward - and upward. Even in "Matelot", where the melody verges on the banal, the music is so artfully tied into the lyrics (which scale no heights either) that the song made tremendous sense in the theatre.

Here is the problem with this assiduous and, I fear, self-defeating compilation. Without the music, most of the verse loses its point. We can be amused for a few moments at the period feel of the text - as in "I went to a marvellous party" when *Dear Cecil arrived wearing armour, Some shells and a black leather bog* - but we have to remember, too, that these songs were often carried by much-loved performers, and such stars as Yvonne Printemps and Beatrice Lillie, Gertrude Lawrence and Coward himself, could have made the Zagreb telephone directory a thing of theatrical joy. Without music, without loving performance, this pious collection is just that. Far better to have celebrated Coward's songs, words and music inalienably together, and produced a series of compact discs containing every available original cast recording. As things depressingly are, the volume is ideal only for those who want to brush up on the lyrics so as to keep the room in a roar with impersonations of the Master singing "Mad Dogs and Englishmen" or "Don't Put your Daughter on the Stage, Mrs Worthington". Not really justification enough.



Henry Bech (b. 1933) is a New York Jew: an over-interviewed and under-fulfilled novelist first imagined by John Updike in *Bech: A Book* (1970) - in which he was fed to the 1960s equipped with writer's block, thinning curly hair, selected modes of sexual regret, and a heavy schedule as cultural ambassador to Russia, Bulgaria, Romania, even Virginia.

In his first collection of stories, Bech was established as fundamentally sympathetic, mildly unprincipled, seriously woman-loving, curiously light of personality, and essentially incomplete - even in his self-concern.

He returned, as we thought he might, in *Bech is Back* (1982), to do time in the 1970s. More trips - to Ghana, Venezuela, Korea, Kenya, Tanzania ("Bech Third-Worlds It"), Australia, Canada, Israel, Scotland ("Macbech") - more women, more block. A marriage entailed a move to Westchester County and stepfatherhood. There followed, at the end of the

Fiction/Galen Strawson

Swept up in a secular vision of nirvana

decade, a late best seller ("Think Big"), sex with his sister-in-law (former girlfriend), marital separation, and reversion to the Upper West Side of his ancestors (at least one generation of them).

And that, we supposed, was the end of Bech, still childless, still unclear, a man made to amuse us, detached from life as if by tragedy; a human being with a fluent sensibility harbouring an absence, hanging on to triviality in order to stay real, a thinned, WASP-crossed blend of Mailer, Bellow, Singer, Malamud, Roth, Salinger (Bech's own list in *Bech: A Book* oddly forgets Heller, with whom he shares time at NYU under the aegis of the GI Bill).

So no one expected to hear more of Bech, least of all Bech: "For some years now

Bech had felt his author wanting to set him aside, to get him off the desk forever". But here is *Bech at Bay*, a "quasi-novel" in five time-slices that carries him way into the sixth age of man (on the Jacques index) and leaves him on the edge of Y2K, a first-time father at 75, a massively resented Nobel Prize winner whose quickfire "falling-in-love apparatus" (an interesting male trait from the point of view of evolutionary psychology) is still tiresomely operative.

Updike takes him up again in 1986, back behind the Iron Curtain in "Bech in Czech", more heavily aware of the Christian past and the Jewish dead around him; suffering the "romantic vertigo" of solitary travel, a deposit box for details. The book then tracks him into his eighth decade, with a backflip to 1972 Los Angeles (Updike, proud to

anachronism, fills Venice Bech with rollerbladers) and a witty encounter with the villainy of the law, "so oddly swirled in every direction but that of the simple truth".

By 1991-3 Bech is living funkily downtown in a loft on Crosby Street south of Houston, still paradoxically male, unreal about women ("you can, through chinks in the male armor, feel a fraction of the bliss that must tumble in upon them all day long"), writing polydegraded tributes for *Festschrifts* as his contemporaries hit 70, then eighty then himself.

Eighty pages long, "Bech Festschrifts" treats in equal measure of aging artistic rivalries and "his pussy hips navel armpits". Lovely Updike seemed touched, in this clever olfactory story by hyperosmia, as Bech, beset by "whiffs", "aromas" and "smells", "scents sex" in

the unsmiling person of Martina O'Reilly, in her "scallion-scented breath", her "scents of apples rotting", her "zenyths of carnal odor", her "tang of overwhelming goodness", not to mention her "old-fashioned plain white bikini underpants".

On to 1997: "Bech Noir" is '74, still living on Crosby, his disabbling memory his serving up old, sour reviews of his books word for word. He feels "a creamy satisfaction" at the news of one critic's death, and wonders whether he might not terminate a few others himself. Like Ben Turnbull, the protagonist of Updike's previous novel *Toward the End of Time* (1987), Bech

knows his time on earth is short. He is tired of the reviewers' "barrage of querulous misprision". He is growing more deeply irresponsible both physically and verbally, and he passes from the intention to the act without a shadow, dispatching two of his unforgettable critics with a septuagenarian malice that thrills Robin, his "post-Jewish" mistress, one-third his age, into active collaboration, serial orgasm, and gelatinous-eyed broodiness.

Hence baby Golda, filling the Crosby Street loft with the "spicy smell of ochre babyshit" and delighting his eyes with her little "tooth-bothered mouth". She is eight months old in 1999 when Bech, in "Bech and the Bounty of Sweden", takes the Nobel Prize in the face of "Mailer, Roth, and Ozick, not to mention Pynchon and DeLillo".

Updike falls us in omitting his own name from this *New York Times* list of the passed-over. (It has already featured in *Bech at Bay* in a list of Johns - Irving, Fowles, O'Hara, Barth, Hersey, Cheever, Updike - whose work Bech doesn't like). He should have named himself; it's not often that realism and cheek both indicate self-reference. It didn't require machismo, only verisimo, and handsome-pressed Updike, his movements of excess so knowing and controlled, his half-true epigraph from Wallace Stevens - "Something of the unreal is necessary to fecundate the real" - taking a page to itself at the front of the book, was well covered. (It is open to him to reply that it was the omission of his name that was unreal.)

Bech's years mask but do not fill his younger

incompleteness, which stems partly from his author's (self-confessed) inability to imagine his Jewish synecdoche fully from the inside. But the imaginative deficit is nothing next to Updike's happy inability to deprive his protagonist of the astonishing character-smuggling output of his (Updike's) own sensibility. His generalisations about human existence can be dazzlingly foolish ("all the forces that create us must, in our instinctive self-approval, seem benign"). He does not show us the depth of life, in his foxy phrasal joy. But he is quite brilliant at the surface, a great lamenter of modern loss, of "orchards gone, under to masts", a man swept upon in his own secular version of nirvana, "the timeless bliss when pencil point touches paper and makes a mark".

It's good that he still has to write at least six more novels in order to complete the set of 26 (one for each letter of the alphabet) that he promised us - or rather himself - early in his career.

BOOKS

The Nile, via the Mountains of the Moon

A fascination for the Victorian adventurer Sir Richard Burton sent Christopher Ondaatje on a journey of discovery

"His dress and appearance were those suggesting a released convict... a rusty black coat with a crumpled black silk stock, his throat destitute of collar, a costume which his muscular frame and immense chest made singularly and inconspicuously hideous, above it a countenance the most sinister I have ever seen, dark, cruel, treacherous, with eyes like a wild beast's. He reminded me of a black leopard, caged, but unforgiving..."

Wilfred Blunt, describing Sir Richard Burton

For over a quarter of a century I have been fascinated with Sir Richard Burton, the great Victorian adventurer. His very name conjures up images of adventure, and he seemed to have lived the life I always wanted to lead. Eventually, Burton's search for the source of the Nile with John Hanning Speke contributed to his being the best-known traveller of the 19th century.

Burton was an outstanding orientalist, archaeologist, linguist, anthropologist, and a controversial diplomat. In over 50 books he covered an amazing diversity of subjects, and his translation of the *Arabian Nights* remains the most famous ever published. His remaining papers were burnt by his widow, perhaps one of the most destructive crimes ever perpetrated on the literary world.

"I find my journal bristling with enthusiasm. Of the gladiatorial moments in human life, methinks, is the departure upon a distant journey into unknown lands. Shaking off with one mighty effort the fetters of habit, the leaden weight of routine, the cloak of many cares and the slavery of home, one feels once more happy. The blood flows with the fast circulation of childhood... A journey, in fact, appeals to imagination, to memory, to hope - the three sister Graces of our moral being."

Richard Burton, Zanzibar.

In the late 1840s, I shed all my business interests and embarked on an enigmatic life of adventure and writing. Since then I have written four books, and the latest, *Journey to the Source of the Nile*, traces journeys of the mid-19th century explorers who strove to solve the riddle of the world's longest river. Where did all this water come from? Europeans knew little about

Africa in the early-19th century. Missionaries arrived; then came explorers who paved the way for colonisation until, 100 years later, the enormous continent was ruled by European powers. Now, Africa seems again a great unknown, gripped by political turmoil, wrestling with huge economic and environmental challenges, struggling to emerge from the long shadow of colonisation.

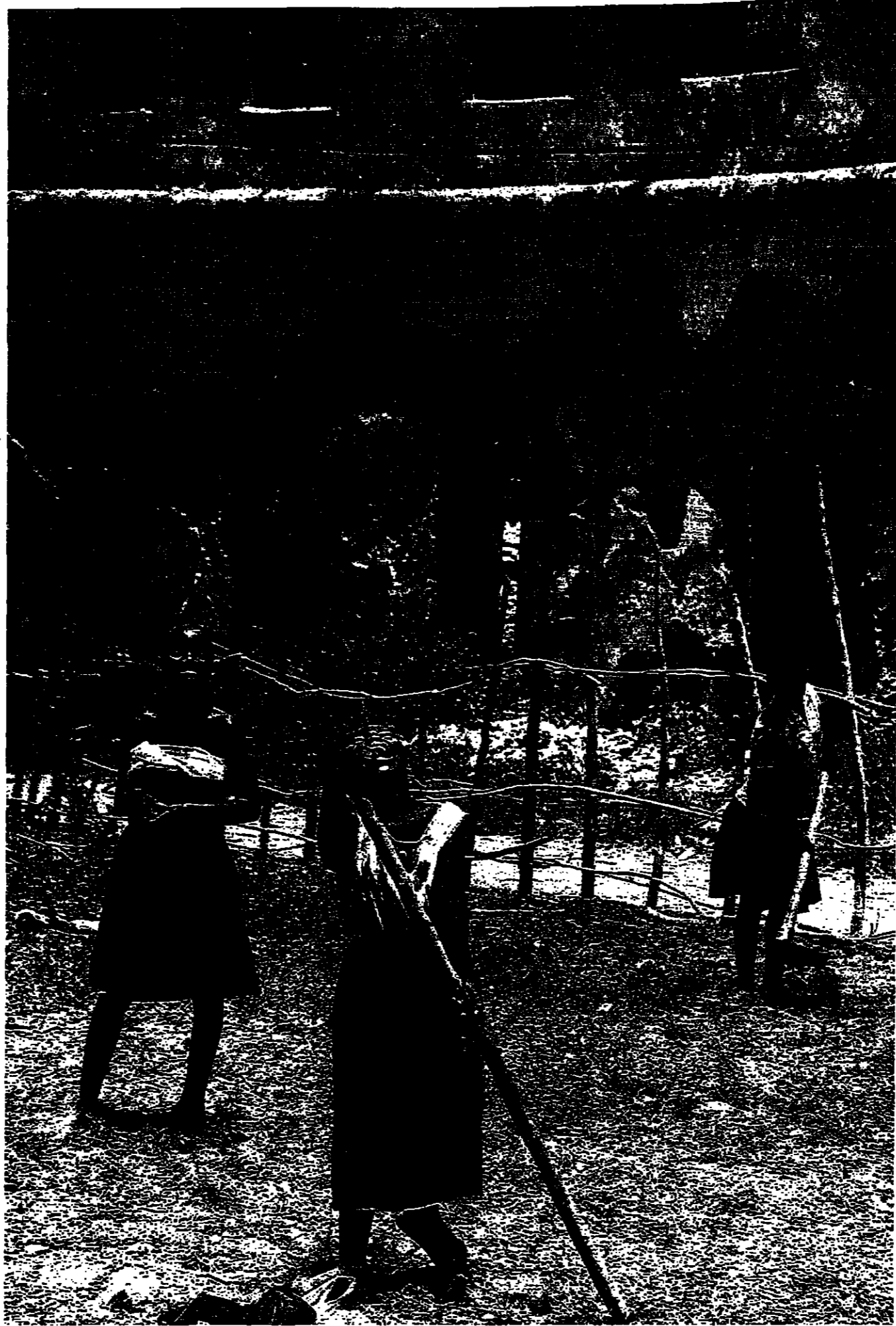
In the 1840s, missionaries in East Africa reported seeing snow-caps on Kilimanjaro and Mount Kenya, and of hearing about a large lake further west. The Royal Geographical Society sent Burton to investigate in 1856. He thought this lake must be the source of the Nile, and set out from Zanzibar to find it. Burton and his companion, John Hanning Speke, were the first Europeans to see Lake Tanganyika, but Burton never saw the source of the Nile. On their return journey, however, Burton allowed Speke to lead a small expedition

Were Speke's claims that Lake Victoria was the source of the Nile accurate? There was only one way to find out

from Kazeh (now Tabora), and changed history. On August 3rd 1858, Speke reached the summit of a hill near present day Mwanza, and wrote: "I no longer felt any doubt that the lake at my feet gave birth to that interesting river (the Nile), the source of which has been the subject of so much speculation, and the object of so many explorers."

But were Speke's claims that Lake Victoria was the source of the Nile accurate? Where did the Ruwenzori Mountains, the famed Mountains of the Moon, fit in? And what about Samuel Baker's claims about Lake Albert? Where did all the water for these two significant lakes come from? What about the Kagera and Semliki rivers? There was only one way to find out.

And so, armed with the journals and maps of all the Victorian explorers - Burton, Speke,



When the fun threatens to become too fast and furious, the song dies, and the performers, with loud shouts of laughter, throw themselves on the ground, to recover strength and breath; Sir Richard Burton describing the inhabitants of the Lake Regions of central Africa, pictured above

Grant, Baker, Livingstone and Stanley - I set out in 1996 with four intrepid Tanzanians to trace the Victorian explorers' journeys and to settle the Nile for myself, just as 140 years ago each of them had set out to do. I had no idea what I would find, but I knew instinctively that more than a river had been born in the geological cradle of the Nile.

What I quickly realised was that I was not only stepping into a giant jigsaw puzzle created by my predecessors, but I had to subject myself to all the horrors that the European scramble for Africa eventually caused: refu-

gees; bandits; the rise of Islam; the rise of tribalism; new attitudes towards Christianity; the blurring of white man's boundaries; and the stark realisation that I would have to step over the line into territories that even the 19th century explorers had failed to enter.

In Kampala, I found a hidden diorama illustrating the drainage of Uganda. The accompanying information fascinated me: it explained something of how plate tectonics affected the Nile, first seriously proposed only in the 1960s and not generally accepted until the 1970s. Then oil exploration

in and near Egypt provided startling evidence of the Nile's early history. Of course, none of this information was available to the Victorian explorers.

Over millions of years, rift valleys formed in Africa as land sank between parallel faults. This pushed the edges of the rift valleys up into escarpments. Lakes formed in the bottom of the rift valleys, collecting water that used to drain away to the west. The rifts also formed a shallow bowl around what is now Lake Victoria. Rivers that flowed west, notably the Katonga and the Kagera, now flowed east, fill-

ing the depression. Then, about 12,500 years ago, the waters of Lake Victoria found a low point at the north edge of the basin and finally established, at Ripon Falls, a permanent outlet down to the western rift valley at the north end of Lake Albert - and a connection to the Nile.

This phenomenal information solved several puzzles for me. Speke's claim that Lake Victoria is the only source of the Nile, is wrong, but it is one of the two great reservoirs, the other being Lake Albert. And the rivers - the Kagera feeding Lake Victoria, and the Semliki feeding lake

Albert - are the two main sources, draining the watershed of the Burundi Highlands and the Ruwenzori Mountains - the Mountains of the Moon.

In terms of time, our safari measured months instead of the years it did for the Victorian explorers. In terms of distance travelled, however, we had done quite well. It was the journey Richard Burton should have made. We had covered a total of 10,024 kilometres - roughly equivalent to one-fourth of the world's circumference at the equator - and one and a half times the length of the Nile. We had traced the routes taken by the greatest Victorian explorers. We had followed the trail of Burton and Speke's 1857 expedition from Zanzibar across Tanzania to Lake Tanganyika. We had retraced the route of Speke and James Augustus Grant along the western and northern rim of Lake Victoria to Ripon Falls and

I now know that Africa will always be a mystery. And the Nile will, I am certain, suddenly find a way to puzzle us anew

the start of the Victoria Nile. We had followed Samuel Baker's journey along the Victoria Nile westward to Murchison Falls and Lake Albert. We had reached the Ruwenzori Mountains, the legendary Mountains of the Moon. We had seen the Semliki River and Lake Edward and Lake George, as Henry Morton Stanley had. Finally, we had finished circling Lake Victoria through Kenya, travelling southward along the eastern shores to Mwanza for a second time.

There was one more startling revelation to come, however. Driving south from Loliondo across the great short grass plains of the Serengeti, we passed through Olduvai Gorge. About 2m years ago there was a large shallow lake here. Rift-related faults released the water. Savanna-adapted animals replaced swamp animals. Fossils of three hominids have been found in the gorge. It is possible, therefore, that the stream of humanity may have a single source in this and similar parts of Africa forced into the rain shadow. The latest (and ongoing) rifting process altered the climate of this region, allowing new species to evolve under the pressure of natural selection. To the west, forest remained, but the area to the east became savanna. The precursors of homo sapiens were forced to devise new ways of surviving. Mary Leakey's amazing discoveries in Olduvai Gorge in 1969 led to this theory, which now views Africa as the cradle of the human race. Thus, the evolution of our ancestors may well have been triggered by the very same geophysical events that formed the present headwaters of the Nile.

I now know that Africa will always be a mystery. And the Nile, just when it seems to have revealed all of its mysteries, will, I am certain, suddenly find a way to puzzle us anew.

Christopher Ondaatje is the author of *Journey to the Source of the Nile* (HarperCollins World, £20).

Paul Lendvai is not the only central European Jewish writer to have lived through both Nazi and Soviet-inspired terror. Unlike some others, he experienced neither Auschwitz nor Siberia and he was spared the greatest horrors. However, his autobiography makes good reading: its value lies in Lendvai's ability to recall the everyday effects of totalitarian rule - and in his courage in admitting to his own weaknesses. This is not the tale of a hero, and is all the more compelling for that.

An everyday tale of Communist folk

This autobiography is all the more compelling for not being a heroic story, argues Stefan Wagstyl

In one of the book's most painful passages, Lendvai describes how, as a young conscript in the Communist militia, he inadvertently betrays his sergeant to the secret police. As a journalist, irritated that

conscription had interrupted his career, he had teamed up with another journalist in his unit. It seemed to Lendvai that he had everything in common with this fellow intellectual, as opposed to the farmers and workers who made up the rest of the squad. However, one day, the unit's sergeant took Lendvai on a short walk and warned him that his journalist friend had in fact been assigned by counter-intelligence to spy on Lendvai.

The sergeant asked Lendvai not to share this news with anyone. But Lendvai did. He told the journalist-informer himself. As he writes, "I have since asked myself time and time again how I could have been so stupid. I cannot reconstruct today what went through my mind at the time." Later, when Lendvai was himself arrested, a secret policeman told him that the sergeant had been "taken care of".

Lendvai, who subsequently worked as a *Financial Times* correspondent for 22 years, starts his book in 1944, when the full force of Nazi terror was launched on

Hungary's Jews. One moment he is a teenage boy supporting Ferencvaros, his football team, and the next he is staring death in the face. He was arrested and assigned to forced labour before he managed to escape and hide in Budapest.

BLACKLISTED: A JOURNALIST'S LIFE IN CENTRAL EUROPE by Paul Lendvai 18 Tauris £4.50, 256 pages

He survived, thanks to a protective passport issued by Carl Lutz, the Swiss consul, one of the four people to whom the book is dedicated. The others are three more saviours of Budapest Jews - Giorgio Perlasca, an Italian businessman who passed himself off as a Spanish diplomat, Angelo Rotta, the Papal nuncio, and the legendary Raoul Wallenberg.

After the war, Lendvai wholeheartedly committed himself to the Communist cause. He does not flinch from describing his role working for the party's official newspaper, in a

band of "enthusiastic fighters in the class struggle." Even when friends on the left were arrested and denounced, Lendvai says his own enthusiasm was undimmed. Others might be embarrassed to write so honestly about their faith in Communism in the light of what is now known about Soviet rule. Lendvai performs a service in bringing to life the spirit of the times.

He also deals well with the onset of disillusion, his own denunciation for "political errors", his expulsion from the Communist party and arrest. Despite his humiliation, he accepted re-instatement into the party because there was no other route to work as a journalist. After the tumultuous 1956 uprising, he had a decision to make - and chose to flee to the west, like thousands of other Hungarians.

After establishing himself in Vienna as a specialist on central European affairs, Lendvai worked for the FT and other publications before becoming editor-in-chief of ORF, the Austrian Broadcasting Corporation. The book's post-1956 chapters are inevitably less dramatic; however, there is an entertaining passage on how he bought freedom to the west for his widowed mother by organising a night at a Viennese stripshow for a visiting Hungarian Communist official.

Fiction/Christine Pountney

Odyssey falls short of its destination

It is said to be notoriously difficult to write "the second book" - especially if the first was a great success. David Guterson, author of the best-selling debut novel, *Snow Falling on Cedars*, must have been under immense pressure to reproduce the popularity of his former book. However, such pressure can be creatively stifling, and *East of the Mountains* strains under the weight of great expectations.

The story itself is thin, the mere framework of a house walled with what protects and insulates the house is an inordinate amount of neutral description: details of the landscape, regional flora and fauna, medicine, hunting, Italy during the second world war - you name it, the author has it covered. If the long, often superfluous descriptive passages were edited out, the novel would stand at a quarter of its present length. One has only to read the long list of acknowledgments to understand the extent to which Guterson drew on the expertise of researchers and specialists to bolster his story.

I am by no means of the opinion that research is anathema to good fiction, but specialised detail should

serve to further the plot, or enable the reader to have a deeper understanding of the characters. If it doesn't, then the writing feels fractured - divided between the story on one hand, and expository facts-of-interest on the other.

In his 1919 essay on *Ham-*

EAST OF THE MOUNTAINS by David Guterson Bloomsbury £15.99, 270 pages

let, T.S. Eliot wrote that "the only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an objective correlative: in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion: such that when the external facts... are given, the emotion is immediately evoked." The reason most of the description in Guterson's novel doesn't work is that it exists for its own sake, and not as a means of either shedding light on the character's state of mind or contributing to the atmosphere of the story. It is almost as if the author uses description in lieu of profundity, as a means of avoiding the deeper emotional questions that the story at times demands:

ironic for a novel which is ostensibly all about one man coming to terms with the idea of his own death.

East of the Mountains is about Ben Givens, a retired heart surgeon dying of colon cancer. All too aware of the physical deterioration that lies ahead, and unwilling to put his family through the ordeal of watching him die, Ben sets off on a hunting trip to stage his own suicide-as-accident.

Needless to say, even before he arrives at his destination, Ben gets into a car accident and the odyssey begins. (There's even a Cyclops - though it's not one Ben has to fight: his own eye gets bruised in the accident and swells shut.) Over the course of the next few days, Ben is forced to face a series of setbacks, the work being the theft of his gun. Gradually, however, inspired by the optimism and generosity of various young people he encounters along the way, Ben comes round to a different way of thinking. He eventually realises that, even in death, he can serve a purpose: that there is dignity not only in being the doctor, but in being the patient as well; that in dying he has yet another gift to bestow, and that is compassion.

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ARTS

Two small study exhibitions at the National Gallery, centred upon particular works in the collections but augmented by significant loans, currently take us deep into the art-historical byways of painting in Florence, Rome and central Italy in the later 15th and early 16th centuries. They represent the kind of exercise beloved of art historians, indeed their meat and drink - recondite squabbles over datings and attributions, supposition argued as certainty. This is in no way to belittle the scholarship involved, but only to remind us that art history is hardly an exact science. Indeed it sometimes seems that the more is discovered, the less is known.

It sometimes seems that the more is discovered, the less is known; nevertheless, it is all fascinating stuff

And if it sometimes seems that the last thing to be remembered is the painting as a painting, it is all nevertheless fascinating and entertaining stuff.

Both exhibitions - on Luca Signorelli, a sometime pupil of Piero della Francesca; and Zanobi Strozzi, an obscure follower of Fra Angelico - also raise questions over the gallery's cleaning policies, for it has been the meaning of particular pictures that has provided this opportunity and excuse. I have no intention of entering into that controversy now, other than to say that it is an argument no-one can ever win in principle, but can only be taken case by case. Should one never clean a picture, ever? Should every picture be kept as fresh as day? Here the Zanobi "Annunciation" (c.1440-45), which in the Gallery's Complete Illustrated Catalogue of 1986 was still given as by "probably... a close follower" of Fra Angelico, was only revealed as what it is by the signature discovered by its recent cleaning - a cleaning which appears to have been fairly robust, to say the least.

This then is a Zanobi where there was none before - or is it? For with one question answered, others more far-reaching are immediately asked. His "Annunciation" is hung here for direct comparison between a "Virgin and Child with Grapes" (c.1428), from a private collection, a wonderfully tender yet monumental image, closely influenced by Masaccio, and given now with some confidence to Fra Angelico; and a similar, no less beautiful though more decorative painting from the Royal Collection, "The Virgin of Humility with Angels" (c.1440), attributed to none other than the Master of the Buckingham Palace Madonna. The stylistic similarities between the three are unmistakable, and most especially between the Zanobi and the Fra



Into the art-historical byways of late-15th early-16th century Italian painting: 'Four Standing Figures' by Luca Signorelli, sometime pupil of Piero della Francesca

Masterpieces - in anyone's book

Viewing two study exhibitions at the National Gallery, William Packer refuses to be drawn into controversy and just enjoys the paintings

Angelico: the same gentle inclination of the head; the same delicately revealed parting in the centre of the forehead; the same hatched modelling of the hair and the folds of the cloak falling around the head and shoulders; the same drawing of the eyes; the same spread of the hand. But if one is surely by Fra Angelico, the other now so obviously by Zanobi? Hmmmm.

With the Signorelli, the larger of the shows - for he was hardly the shadowy figure of Zanobi, and the Gallery has eight of his works, including three huge altarpieces and two frescoes -

the questions are less of attribution than of chronology, though the one thing does tend to lead to the other. Signorelli, though not now so highly regarded as he was a century ago, was a prominent figure of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, and much admired and well-documented in his time. He trained in the workshop of Piero della Francesca in the 1470s, and in his own work stands as a bridge between the cool and mystical formality of his master, and the more easy naturalism of the new century. We clearly mark this transition in the great "Circumcision" altar-

piece of 1481, for example, with its theatrical formal setting, the crisp profiles and sometimes flattened, stilted modelling of the principals, and yet the active, natural gestures of the supporting full-length figures.

Only the dates are puzzling. There is the wonderful man upon his ladder, a fragment from a huge "Lamentation" of about 1505, from a Scottish collection, which stands happily as a robust development within the general oeuvre. But then comes a ravishingly beautiful "Virgin and Child" from a private collection, never published nor even exhib-

ited before, a standing figure as though part of a larger composition, possibly a "Presentation". It is confidently set around 1510, and yet its elegiac mood seems more 15th than 16th century, and more Venetian than Florentine. Another fragment is even more delightful, a head and shoulders of the Mourning Virgin, again in private hands and until now unpublished, and set between 1509 and 1515 to keep some options open. Can so vigorous and simple an image be so late?

And we go back to the earliest Signorelli in the show, the Gallery's own "Holy Family" of

1486-90, given to him now with some certainty. Again it is a lovely thing, the tenderness of images of the holy child at his mother's breast, and it is like nothing else in the exhibition, but can it really be earlier than the 1490 "Circumcision" altarpiece, let alone that "Virgin and Child" of 1510? The modelling of the Virgin's head and hands is delicately full and rounded, her whole body sitting comfortably in the space allowed her. It is a painting that takes Signorelli forward surely into another age. Were it set against the "Circumcision", for it is hung around the

corner, one would hardly believe it to be from the same hand. All the great men are sure it is; but, as I say, theirs is no exact science. The paintings are the paintings they are, for us to respond to and enjoy.

Signorelli in British Collections: Sunley Room, National Gallery, Trafalgar Square, London WC2, until January 31; supported by The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation. Zanobi Strozzi - In the Light of Fra Angelico: Room 1, The National Gallery, until March 7; supported by The George Beaumont Group.

Television/Christopher Dunkley

A shrewd eye for phoneys

As from tomorrow, Sunday evening is going to be a time to stay in for a few weeks. Two new factual series start, each worth watching, so that taken together they make the backbone of a worthwhile evening's viewing. *Bill Bryson's Notes From A Small Island*, a six-part series from Carlton, screened on ITV between 7.00 and 7.30, is based on the book that has had - is still having - such a phenomenally successful run in the British best-seller lists. *Hostage* is a three-part series, shown by Channel 4, between 8.30 and 9.30, telling the story of the Beirut hostage saga.

It is hard to imagine a more vivid contrast in content or style, but both series are exceptionally well made. The first is charming and highly entertaining, and the second reinforces what has become a powerful tradition at the independent channels, which specialises in scrupulously detailed recent history. It is hard to resist a man who comes from abroad and insists on telling you what a wonderful country you live in, especially when he proves that, far from being one of those suggestible Americans who go into babbling ancestor worship in front of anything more than 300 years old, he is actually a shrewd and sometimes tart commentator with a beady eye for the phoney. There was no reason to believe that, just because his books are such a delight to read, Bryson would prove to be a useful television presenter, and yet he is rather more than that. He has a relaxed style and an affinity for the camera that is pretty rare.

Tomorrow's opening programme begins with his description of his arrival in Dover 25 years ago, his fruitless hunt for a bed (we are lucky he did not turn round there and then and get back on the ferry) and a selection of the things he had

never heard of, including streaky bacon, Bellisha beacons, Morecambe and Wise, *Gardeners' Question Time* and Sheffield Wednesday. He claims that after seeing a man who asked for 20 Number Six being given a packet of cigarettes, he assumed that all goods in newsagents were ordered by number, Chinese restaurant style. And he insists that, early in his stay, he discovered a sign beside a sink in the British Museum saying "Casual ablutions only please". I expect he means a basin.

In Programme 1 he is good on blue plaques, London cabs, and a bizarre system of "pointless tunnels" built under the houses of Liverpool by a man named Williamson. In next week's programme he notes that cricket is the only sport in the world to incorporate meal breaks (has anyone told him you can get four nights' sleep during a Test Match?) and expatiates on Blackpool which, he asserts, gets more visitors each year than Greece, has more holiday accommodation than Portugal, and leads the world in the per capita consumption of chips. Yet it becomes clear that he does not like Blackpool: a fact that somehow makes his coverage all the more admirable.

In *Hostage* Phil Craig, Mick Gold and Tim Pritchard set about the Beirut hostage story with techniques precisely similar to those used in the former Brook Lapping series *The Second Russian Revolution* and *The 50 Years War: Israel And The Arabs*, and interviewing every survivor of any significance from all the countries involved, and raiding the archives for newsreels.

It is, of course, fascinating to hear the memories of those such as journalist Terry Anderson, who was held by Hezbollah and other terrorist organisations, and from their relatives, such as Anderson's sister,



An American in Blackpool: Bill Bryson

Peggy Say, who recalls becoming quite blasé about receiving regular phone calls at home from the men's captors.

It is moving to hear David Jacobson's account of listening to CIA man Bill Buckley coughing and dying in the next cell, and fascinating to be told how the detail of making imaginary journeys around familiar streets can help keep a hostage sane. But the most striking element of the first two programmes is the contrast that becomes apparent between the public and private attitudes of the western powers whose citizens were kidnapped.

The US, UK and France presented a united front to the world, declaring their determination not to do deals with hostage takers. But behind the scenes the Americans and French were simultaneously hard at work cooking up deals to extricate their own nationals.

The most cynical ruse of all was the use by the Americans of Terry Waite at the scene of successive homecomings by American hostages to suggest that his activities had achieved the release, when it was actually Oliver North's clandestine arms deals that were doing the trick.

There's nothing like facing the future for concentrating the mind on the past. With the new millennium looming, Radio 4 leapt into the history business with the *Today* poll on the man of the millennium past. The short list was highly un-pc (no women, no Scots), though the inclusion of Cromwell was doubtless a nod to some sort of radicalism.

In fact he was trounced, perhaps a sign of the doubt assailing the Blairite age as to a people's champion who abolishes parliament and who opts to replace the Lords with his own nominees. This despite the gallant advocacy of Lady Antonia Fraser who quoted Milton's sonnet to "Cromwell, our chief of men" at the drop of a hat, by an amazing coincidence the title of her best-seller about our last military dictator.

The chirpily shallow view of history was nonchalantly summed up by the remorselessly chirpy Lisa Jardine (custom-built pundit for Radio 4: chirpy, academic, all too easy to understand and female) and her like, who laughingly concluded that no lessons could be drawn from these historical polls, even while pointing out that Cromwell dispensed from guilt anyone killing the Irish, as the Irish were somehow sub-human. Some of us non-historians might have thought this century alone had taught the lesson - at Auschwitz, Cambodia, Kosovo and Rwanda - against writing off a particular race or creed as sub-human.

Radio 4 brought back *This Septentred Isle*, marred by a bizarre howler in its trailer. A schoolmarish Anna Massey anticipated the Anglo-Saxons in "the fourteen-hundreds". She meant four-hundreds, but what's a thousand years in the current feverish preoccupation with

Radio A real feel for history needed

millennia? What puzzles me is the number of alleged professionals who let this trailer through: writer, performer, director, studio management, producer... Is there nobody in the BBC's punch-drunk ranks who gives a damn about accuracy?

A real feeling for history - that is, a knowledge of how it fits seamlessly into the present - was evinced in Radio 4's *Dr Graham's School*. Tim Jenkins visited a Bengali school founded at the turn of the century for the Anglo-Indian offspring of British tea-planters. The school still thrives for Anglo-Indians, its loving principles scrupulously observed, its old boys sporting names like Frank and Ginger and accents that we once thought so delightfully entertaining coming from Peter Sellers. Dr Graham showed the human face of colonial benevolence. "We never knew our mothers or fathers," said one alumnus, explaining the cries of "Daddy! Daddy! Daddy!" that greeted the doctor. Its present principal is called Lancelot, which seems in keeping with the school's ideals of friendship and fellowship.

The one worry is that the Anglo-Indian community may not be assimilated into modern India. One charming septuagenarian excused herself for still being more

Anglo-British than Anglo-Indian; but realised that things must change. Given the recent atrocities perpetrated by militant Hindus, now turning on Christians the cruelty previously reserved for their own untouchables, I keep my fingers crossed. This was a fascinating item about a little-known remnant of the Raj.

Christopher Reeve, the actor of *Superman*, talked to Peter White in *No Triumph, No Tragedy*, launching a series on disabled achievers. The bitter irony of the accident that paralysed him has been extenuated by the actor's courage in battling back against a broken neck. Other new series include *For One Horrible Moment*, Peter Bradshaw's reading of a modern mock-Gothic childhood memoir set in the Cambridgeshire fens and permeated with the deadpan, black humour that evokes the American illustrator Edward Gorey. Wonderful pastiche, genuinely original (if that's not a contradiction). Other new arrivals include *The Patrick and Maureen Mayne Music Experience*. One of the treasures of ITV's underrated *Is It Legal?* is the exquisitely judged comedy playing of Patrick Barlow and Imelda Staunton. Here they are reunited as a poisionously estranged married couple presenting a truly terrible classical music radio programme - a mix of Kenyonesque populism and Classic FM. The basic premise won't wash: radio has switches, knobs and controls - you don't hear the vicious bickering of presenters, ill-timed intrusions, the bleating of bewildered phone-ins. The radio equivalent of backstage comedy à la *Noises Off* is almost impossible to conceive. But never mind the plot, feel the acting.

Martin Hoyle

ARTS

Singin' and dancin' into movie history

Nigel Andrews talks to film director Stanley Donen about his legendary screen musicals

There are two movie truths universally acknowledged. One, *Singin' in The Rain* is the best screen musical. Two, "Singin' in The Rain" is the best screen musical number.

No wonder the film's director, Stanley Donen - that pocket-sized Hercules of the song-and-dance movie who also made *On The Town*, *Royal Wedding*, *Funny Face* and *Seven Brides For Seven Brothers* (plus non-musical hits like *Charade* and *Bedazzled*) - responded to his lifetime achievement Oscar last year with a song about bad weather. Not that song, but the one about it being a lovely day to be caught in the rain.

The Astaire-Rogers standard goes on about "dancing cheek to cheek", which is exactly what Donen did onstage last March with his statuette, touching the hearts of a billion televisioners across the globe.

"I only sang eight bars," he points out. "They only allowed me a minute for my response to the award. The idea of doing the song came to me one night in bed. I thought, 'What should I sing?' and started humming that tune."

He will get more than a minute to respond to acclaim this year. By divine coincidence 1999 is the 75th birthday of both Donen and MGM, the studio synony-

mous with song and dance. People in Culver City, birthplace of the "Ars Gratia Artis" lion, are already barricading their doors against flying champagne corks.

This man may be the greatest ever maker of musicals. He didn't just film the best shows or scores, he invented amazing ways to do so. He made Fred Astaire dance on the ceiling. He made Gene Kelly dance in the rain or with a cartoon mouse or in *Cover Girl* with his identical double. That last was done, he says, "by covering two entire soundstages with black cloth. Each movement of the first Kelly was marked with chalk, then we filmed the second Kelly around them, including the shot where he jumps over himself." This was in pre-digital 1944 - state of the art or what?

For all his films' flamboyance, there is little showbizzy or ingratiating about Donen himself. I learned this twice, to my cost. Once was during a recent interview in Hollywood, the other was six years ago at his Beverly Hills home, when I visited him for a 40th anniversary Q-and-A about *Singin' in The Rain*. Donen doesn't suffer fools gladly, and you sometimes wonder if he suffers anyone gladly.

"Oh my god, don't you

know that?" (When I ask him about the appeal of Cary Grant with whom he made four films).

"I think what you just said is so vague it'd be difficult to agree or disagree." (When I talk airily about the "through-choreographed" style of the MGM musicals).

"It isn't funny at all." (When I giggle while raising the story of *On The Town* actor-dancer Jules Munshin, who suffered vertigo while forced to caper debonairly atop the Empire State Building). "I don't know if you have a phobia, but if you do you know that you have no control. Jules was very brave that day..."

At other times Donen can be docile, even expansive. He chose that Oscar song, he says, in homage to the man who first filled him with showbiz ambition. Donen was a small child when he saw *Flying Down To Rio* whose cast contained, in a supporting role, one Frederick Astaire.

"I was enchanted by him. Everything he did looked as if it had no effort but just happened at the moment. As I learned later, and it was a great lesson, everything was so thoroughly and exhaustively rehearsed that it just looked like he was doing it as easily as breathing."

The other great lesson was an anti-lesson. Young Donen hated Busby Berkeley's films, those ones where armies of elaborately dressed chorines twirl around, forming parade-ground patterns.

"Today I think they're quite spectacular, but as a young man I thought them stupid and silly and endless and inhuman. A thousand pianos, now we can do 1,000 bags of cement. Or 1,000 lampshades. I was quite negative about them. But I think ultimately that was very helpful, because it formed my style by giving me something to steer away from."

After *Flying Down To Rio* the boy who was already in love with cinema - he had been given a movie camera by his father - decided to fall in love with musicals. He hoofed on Broadway, then went to Hollywood and met Gene Kelly. "He asked me to be assistant choreographer on *Cover Girl*. Later we directed *On The Town* together."

Between the two came *Anchors Aweigh*, for whose best-known number Donen

had one of his three-in-the-morning brainwaves. He woke Kelly at that hour to tell him he wanted him to dance with a cartoon mouse. "Nothing like it had been done before. I wanted to use Mickey Mouse, but Disney wouldn't let us. So we used Jerry from MGM's Tom and Jerry cartoons." Donen dance-doubled for the rodent during rehearsals. "I was nicknamed 'Mouse' for ever after."

Reports differ on whether the Kelly-Donen marriage was made in heaven or the other place. Donen denies he made one attributed remark which went "Substitute for the word 'co-direct' the word 'fight' and you have it."

"Gene and I were very different personalities who found in each other different things we responded to and liked. We weren't always seeing things the same way, otherwise it didn't need us both to direct. So 'conflict', not 'fight', is the word."

How, with half a century's hindsight, would he compare Kelly's dance style with Astaire's? "The pleasure you get from watching each is quite different and that's the joy of it. Gene was this wonderfully brash Irish-American go-getter-type fellow. Fred was a laid-back, sophisticated, suave, gentle mover. It's the difference between sliding across a room and jumping on a pogo stick."

Paradoxically, though, Astaire's best-known dance for Donen was a gymnastic, highly-wrought novelty

number - "Kellyish" in spirit - while Kelly's best-known dance was as smooth as silk and as simple-seeming as an Astaire solo. The first was *Royal Wedding's* upside-down dance, that famous showpiece that called for a set with fixed tables and glued-in-place drapery so that Astaire could appear to dance up the wall and then across the ceiling, while actually the whole room unit revolved. The Kelly number was - what else? - *Singin' in The Rain*.

Like many great things, it came about by virtual immaculate conception. "I remember first discussing it with producer Arthur Freed who'd written the song (which had been used, like nearly all *Singin'* numbers, in previous movies). I said casually, 'Arthur, we've got this wonderful idea. Gene's gonna sing and dance in the rain.' It was as simple as that. The pleasure of just being alive, of being in love, and having nature hit you in the face."

It was less simple to film, he explains. "Like most night scenes shot in studios back then, it was done during the day under black tarpaulins pulled over the street. They were stretched from telegraph pole to telegraph pole. Black attracts heat, as you know, so these tarpaulins that were almost the length of a city block were heated by the sun pouring down on them, and the water was warm, and Gene and everyone was sweating. We had to do countless retakes even though he had a cold and ended up with a fever."

Donen had even worse struggles on *Funny Face*, his and MGM's last indisputably great musical. The photographer hero played by Fred Astaire was based on Richard Avedon, whom Donen wanted to supervise the film's lighting. It became a drawn-out power struggle with the movie's official cameraman.

"The cinematographer was terrified of Avedon, terrified that his authority was being challenged. In my opinion he was quite stupid about it. So Richard and I developed a sign language on the set. If he touched his tie or nodded or scratched his shoulder, it meant he wanted a particular lighting change."

"It wasn't funny at all," Donen says, when once

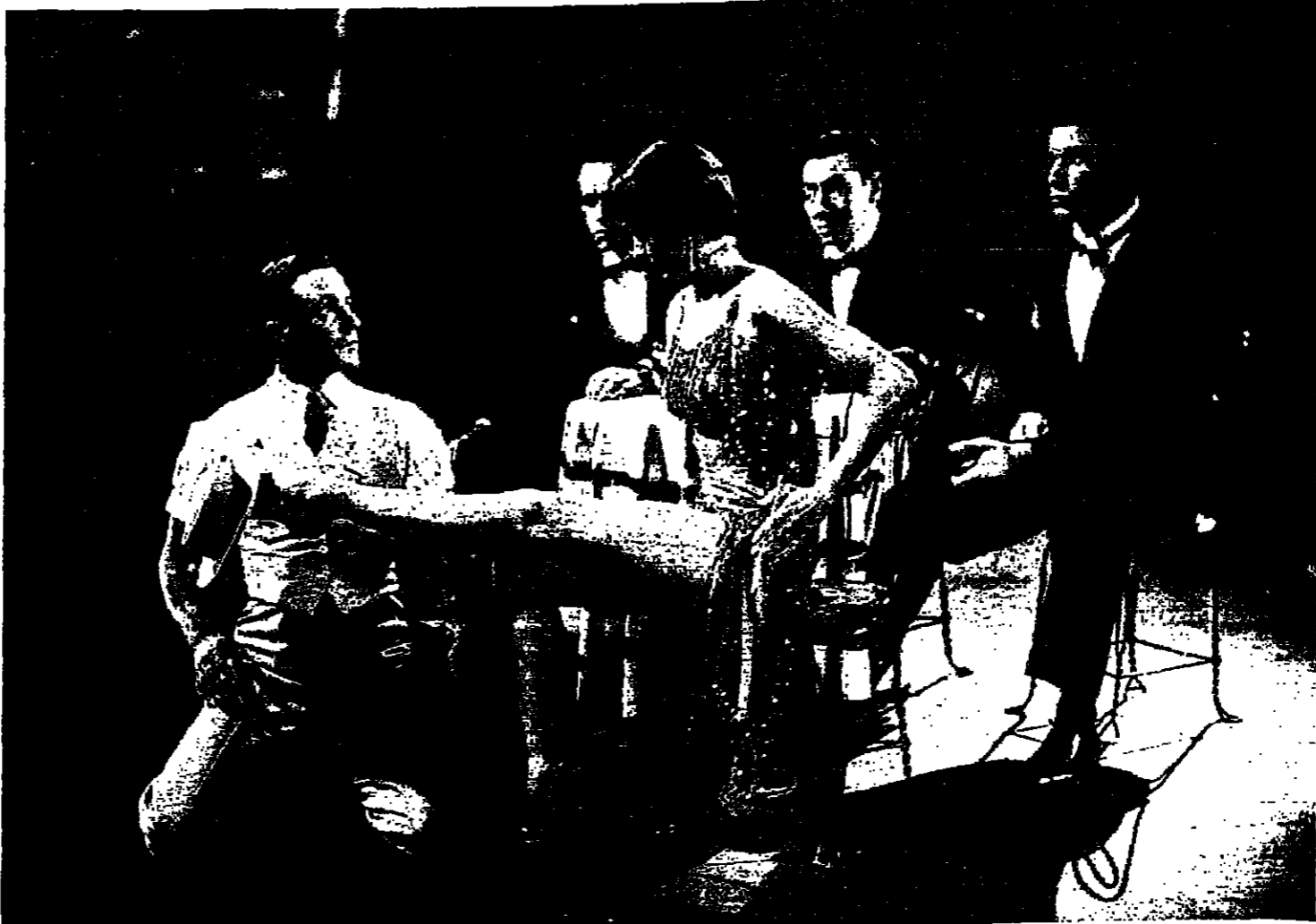
again I gave a rash chuckle. "It was a hellish situation and a miracle the film turned out as it did."

As a finale I composed an elaborate question on the death of the screen musical. I listed aloud half-a-dozen possible contributory factors and then ask the director if the genre's decline is the fault of these.

There was a deadly beat of silence. "Is it the fault of people to do it. They'd be trained up from childhood as we all were. Performers like Garland, Astaire and Kelly, writers like Gershwin and Irving Berlin, they did it from their youth. And producers like Arthur Freed knew everything about music yet never discouraged you from trying something new. They were amazing years. Maybe that'll never happen again."

time, in the same way that the impressionists worked together and then disappeared, never to be repeated.

"Also part of it is circular. Musicals are not being made, so there's nobody to make them. If we had a continuing tradition, a work in progress of making song-and-dance films, there'd be tons of people to do it. They'd be trained up from childhood as we all were. Performers like Garland, Astaire and Kelly, writers like Gershwin and Irving Berlin, they did it from their youth. And producers like Arthur Freed knew everything about music yet never discouraged you from trying something new. They were amazing years. Maybe that'll never happen again."



'They were amazing years. Maybe that'll never happen again': Gene Kelly and Cyd Charisse in 'Singin' in the Rain'



'Dancing cheek to cheek' with his Oscar last year: Stanley Donen



Based on the photographer Richard Avedon; Audrey Hepburn and Fred Astaire in 'Funny Face'

How the Design Museum caught the eye of the Establishment

After a troubled decade, Sir Terence Conran's baby has finally grown up, reports Simon Tait

On April 1 1982 a spoof poster appeared on noticeboards around the offices of the Victoria & Albert museum. It advertised a forthcoming series of shows entitled "Royal Flush", an examination of the history of toilets through such exhibitions as "Shut That Door! Swedish open plan lavatories", "Completely Potty, the Bauhaus and the chamber pot", and "Closet Queen - Queen Victoria and the WC: sketches, designs, diaries".

The spoof was poking fun at an experiment called The Boilerhouse Project, a Terence Conran initiative at the museum to explore the history of industrial design; but more than a few who saw the poster missed the joke as it fitted perfectly with their image of the scheme.

Undeterred by Establishment cynicism, Conran went on to turn his Boilerhouse Project into the Design Museum. Now Chris Smith has confounded those early scoffers and conferred national status on Conran's experiment with a £200,000 grant, the museum's first ever public revenue funding, putting it somewhere near the centre of the government's vision of a cultural Britain.

On Monday, Conran will announce that he is standing down as chairman of the museum's board to make way for James Dyson, the vacuum cleaner engineer who became an icon of industrial design success when he ignored universal rebuffs to his pleas for investment and established his own company to put his ideas into practice. The company is today worth \$650m. "I can't think of a better symbol for British design than James Dyson," says Christopher Frayling, Rector of the Royal College of Art and trustee of the V&A. And on January 20, the Design Museum opens its most ambitious exhibition to date, *Modern Britain*, which tracks the Art Deco influence in British design.



'Dog and Target' by Mark Tobey, 1934; and Royal Doulton's Acid Jug, 1937: two of the exhibits in the forthcoming 'Modern Britain' exhibition

It will be the first exhibition designed by the architect whom many describe as the arch-priest of postmodernism, Norman Foster. Sponsored by actuaries Bacon & Woodrow, the exhibition covers not only the architecture of the likes of Wells Coates and Erno Goldfinger, but also paintings, sculpture, graphics, furniture and textiles which, Foster believes, are as influential now as they were 65 years ago. "The Modern Movement in Britain, in a more mature phase, has never

been healthier or more vigorous" he writes in the catalogue.

As it approaches its 10th anniversary, the Design Museum can afford to reflect with some satisfaction on a troubled decade. Conran didn't want the Design Museum to be just a department in the basement of the V&A. "He felt that we were not a decorative arts institution," says Paul Thompson, who joined the fledgling museum as a curator and is now its director. "We were the specialists in contemporary

industrial design and architecture."

Still in the V&A basement, a 29-year-old lecturer in art theory, Stephen Bayley, was brought from the University of Kent. In the "white box" space, he put on some important shows, introducing us to the genius of Kenneth Grange, the co-founder of Pentagram; to the couture wizardry of Issey Miyake; to his "perfect car", the Ford Sierra; and to the creative potential of the shopping bag. "It was a bit of trade show,

but the truth is that there was nothing else providing a showcase for British contemporary industrial design," says Frayling.

But Conran was thinking big. He wanted more than a white box. He embarked on a great adventure, to open as the Design Museum in a former warehouse in Butler's Wharf, on what he foresaw as a vibrant new south-side river community east of Tower Bridge. There were plans for the new Tate Gallery to move there, along with Vivien Duf-

"You shouldn't call this a museum. Museums are boring places". In a sense she was right. Bayley's notion was that a permanent collection was an unnecessary burden for the showcase of design, a forward-looking subject if ever there was one.

But the museum opened with *Commerce and Culture*, an exhibition which failed in its purpose to establish a manifesto for design excellence. Disastrously few people went, and when it closed three months later Bayley had gone. "He was an instigator, not an administrator," says Thompson.

There were subsequently some key shows - *Graphic Design in America* and *Dutch PTT* were well reviewed - but Butler's Wharf failed as a cultural quarter: the tourists who had been expected to flood across Tower Bridge never arrived. Conran had to rescue the museum from collapse with a £2.2m grant.

In 1992, Thompson was promoted with a brief to create a business plan for closure. "It seemed to me that if we democratised the place and gave it a more educational edge, we might be able to make a business plan for survival."

The Design Museum's turning point came in 1995 with a Frank Lloyd Wright exhibition which struck a mood and an educational need. "It was the first show which genuinely impressed scholars, with material from the US which had never crossed the Atlantic before. Visitor numbers began to climb at last and for the last three years the museum has made a small profit," says Thompson.

"We didn't really expect anything for the Design Museum because we couldn't see any future" Frayling recalls, "but it has become an indispensable educational resource now at all levels. A gauntlet has been thrown down on behalf of design and technology, and it has been picked up. I think we're catching Terence up at last."

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Whiff of success for a skin doctor in essence

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How to Spend It

Regular or fabulous? Your choice

Holly Finn sets out to add serious gusto to the job of spending it

Of all the questions you could be asked, one of the very best is: which do you prefer? It goes right to the guts of a matter.

Choose one. Yellow or saffron, Bose or Bang & Olufsen, alligator or ostrich, Karan or Klein, lace wallpaper or plain paint. Hey, leather or lace. It's easier when it's Manichaeism; usually it's not.

The point of these pages is to call the crowd and ease your choices, to leave the whole dough-spending experience. So from my fridge to yours, a cartoon by Roz Chast that appeared in *The New Yorker* some years ago: a picture of two petrol pumps, side by side, above one a sign reading "Regular", above the other, "Fabulous". The aim here is to spotlight the more noteworthy nozzle.

This weekend I take over as *How To Spend It* editor from Lucia van der Post. She has put

together these pages for 26 years and, in the time I have read and known her, has taught me much about style. She is a mighty graceful act to follow. I shall try.

For thinking people, deciding how to spend it, and then actually parting with money, can be as mentally wrenching as trying to order a regular coffee at Starbucks. If we feel mild-fibrillations, even all-out attacks, before handing over the big notes, it isn't because we're skinflints - necessarily. It's because what we pick to purchase matters. We are, in the end, what we choose.

The great thing is that every item, like every person, has a story. A furniture-maker chooses to use willow and ash

tree, rather than lucite, for a reason. Those who mix perfumes and potions to match the essence - the olfactory gist - of a person are making a point. Even sweaters can be tale-tellers.

Goods that are worthwhile are the same as people who are. They don't sidle up to the bar and slur at you, cataloguing their plusses. They are, simply and with reason, hard to resist.

As a friend from California's Napa Valley says about wine: you know a good vintage when your hand reaches for a second glass without thinking. These pages try to give you a taste of things - their look and smell and texture - but it is always your hand that flexes. Sprited efforts at earning are

what make possible the devilish fun of spending. Is this buying of things just whimsy? Well, are we invertebrate? Isn't there more to it? The particular gadgets and gizmos, shirts and skirts, creamy creams and buttery leather-works that appeal, the ones we are compelled to pluck from the shelves, matter to us. But why?

In a speech he gave in Illinois in 1942, Abraham Lincoln weighed in on the topic: "It is said by some that men will think and act for themselves."

Let us examine this. Let me ask the man who could maintain this position most stitily what compensation he will accept to go to Church some Sunday and sit during the sermon with his

wife's bonnet upon his head? "Not a trifle, I'll venture. And why not? There would be nothing irreligious in it, nothing immoral, nothing uncomfortable - then why not? Is it not because there would be something egregiously unfashionable in it?"

What is the influence of fashion but the influence that other people's actions have on our actions - the strong inclination each of us feels to do as we see all our neighbors do?

Now, Abe was a smart man, but he dressed like a Transylvanian usher. There is a reason these pages are not called *Where To Spend It* or *Whether To Spend It* or *Go Ahead, Spend It All*. Or, *C'mon*

'n *Covet Thy Neighbour*. They're called *How To Spend It*. Because how you do things - how you think, walk, speak to waiters, how you go about picking your purchases and distributing your ducats - is telling. It's got less to do with the Joneses than with you. What makes you different makes you better.

Which is why, talking about style of all sorts, these pages aim to be crisp not cryptic, smart not sugary, rightly to gauge what will interest and distinguish you. They are intended for those keen on extraordinary things, not on being duped.

A fool and his money are soon parted, a sage and his not long after. We are writing for the latter, to add serious gusto and



Holly Finn: 'How you distribute your ducats is telling'

hopefully some insight, to the business of your spending. Which do you prefer? What a question.

Whiff of success for a skin doctor in essence

Reggie Nadelson talks to a Florentine perfumer

I am in Florence and an Italian is sniffing my arm. Between whiffs, he talks about Cherie Blair, how pretty and smart she is. This is not as odd as it sounds.

Lorenzo Villorei is a perfume-maker who creates customised scent. Up here in the penthouse of his medieval palazzo - you can smell it half a block away - is a room with a staggering view of Florence and a thousand bottles of scent to work with, including amber, *sapone di mare* (sea smell), tobacco, grass, vanilla, iris and chilli pepper.

The British prime minister's wife has stopped by on a couple of occasions. When she was in search of a gift for the Queen at Balmoral, Villorei suggested she take the red travertine marble dish with some poppourri. Scent, Italian-style, has a power that crosses borders.

Everybody is different, says Villorei. His job is to identify the essence of that individuality and enhance it. "It's the most interesting part of my work," he says. "People tell me everything about themselves, who they are, the signal they want to give, the atmosphere."

"Fragrance is like clothing. I build it up a layer at a time. I think of myself as a scent doctor." Villorei grins at his own hyperbole. Still, he adds, "Everyone comes. Rich, poor, students, ambassadors. Jackie Kennedy was a client."

At 42, Villorei is more alchemist than simple scent-maker. A modern Renaissance man, he reads philosophy, cooks, speaks several languages, travels, and collects pop music from the 1950s and 1960s (Petula Clark is singing "Downtown" while he attends to my arm).

But Villorei is also in business. From his studio he sells the perfume, as well as the soap, the poppourri and the scented candles in white alabaster pots to the best stores in Japan, Hong Kong, Europe and the US. In London, the LV line - exquisitely packaged in the dark blue crystal bottles Villorei designed himself - sells at Fortnum & Mason, the White House and Liberty.

Villorei reckons his business is worth about \$1m now. It's growing quickly and, he laughs, "the margins are good. I like the idea I am a merchant. But my friends, of course, thought I was completely crazy when I began. I was supposed to be a serious academic." Villorei's father was a historian and man of letters.

Only his mother didn't think her son completely nuts. But, then, Villorei's mother is a remarkable woman. In the late 1940s, she set up a shop selling Italian goods in Cairo. "Before King Farouk fell," she says, "everyone went to Cairo."

Villorei was born and grew up in and around Florence. The Villa Villorei, just outside the town, sits in its own lush gardens, the lemon trees heavy with fruit. The villa has the longest loggia in Italy, and the rooms of this summer palace are all brilliantly frescoed. For years, the family has run it as a hotel. Villorei often finds ingredients for his poppourri - some spicy, some floral - in the woods nearby.

After he read psychology in Florence, Lorenzo worked his way round London, Paris and Jerusalem studying ancient philosophy and religion. In the Middle East, he collected spices for cooking and a collection of ancient bottles. When he



A modern Renaissance man who is multilingual, reads philosophy and was expected to become an academic, Lorenzo Villorei says: 'I think of myself as a scent doctor'

came home, his friends started asking for special "essences".

Florence has always had a tradition for perfume-making. Modern perfume was first made in 1370 at the command of Queen Elizabeth of Hungary. ("My

'I like the idea I am a merchant. But my friends thought I was crazy when I began'

grandmother was Hungarian," points out Villorei.) But perfume really took off as an art in Renaissance Florence. Catherine de Medici took her personal perfume to France when she married the future French king, Henry II. Now, in a sense, perfume has come home.

In the early 1980s, Villorei says, a friend who worked at Fendi, the Italian design house, needed scented candles. Placing an order, she asked: "What's the name of your company?" He invented a name and went on to make private label goods for Emporio Armani, Paul Stuart in New York and Lane Crawford in Hong Kong.

Villorei experimented with plants, reading books, making tinctures, fiddling around with distillation equipment. "Mostly what I made was a mess," he groans.

By 1990, Villorei was in business. He built perfumes for individual clients, and designed crystal bottles and leather cases, as well as the travertine dishes for the poppourri. His scents became an international cult. He has a staff of five now, as well as several consultants, and has built a new laboratory near his family home.

For part of every year he travels the world. From time to time, like a Medici magician, he turns up in New York, Hong Kong, London,

showing his wares, demonstrating his facility for customised scent-making.

In the past few years, says Villorei, people have started to want specialist perfume.

"They do not want things they can buy in a duty-free shop at any airport."

This is a family business and Villorei's partner is his wife Ludovica, a spirited, warm woman of Russian descent - her grandfather fled the revolution and settled in Italy. A Renaissance beauty with pale red-gold hair, Ludovica speaks half a dozen languages fluently.

When she met her future husband at a party in Venice, she was running her family's farm near Padua. After a few years of commuting, she moved back to Florence where she had grown up and married.

The summer before last, Ludovica was in old jeans painting the studio wall when the buzzer went. It was August. Florence was shut up tight.

Ludovica ran down the stairs and, she recalls: "There was a good looking dark-haired woman at the

door. She said she had read about us in Britain. I said we were closed. She said she really wanted to buy some of our things." Ludovica laughs.

"Suddenly, I realised who it was. Cherie Blair bought some Christmas presents and invited us to their villa."

This year she made a return visit. "I tried to be very cool," Ludovica grins, "but it was a bit hard to do

when she asked me what I thought would be nice to take to the Queen."

■ Lorenzo Villorei, Via de' Bardi, 14 50125 Florence; tel: (055) 234 11 87, fax: (055) 234 58 33.

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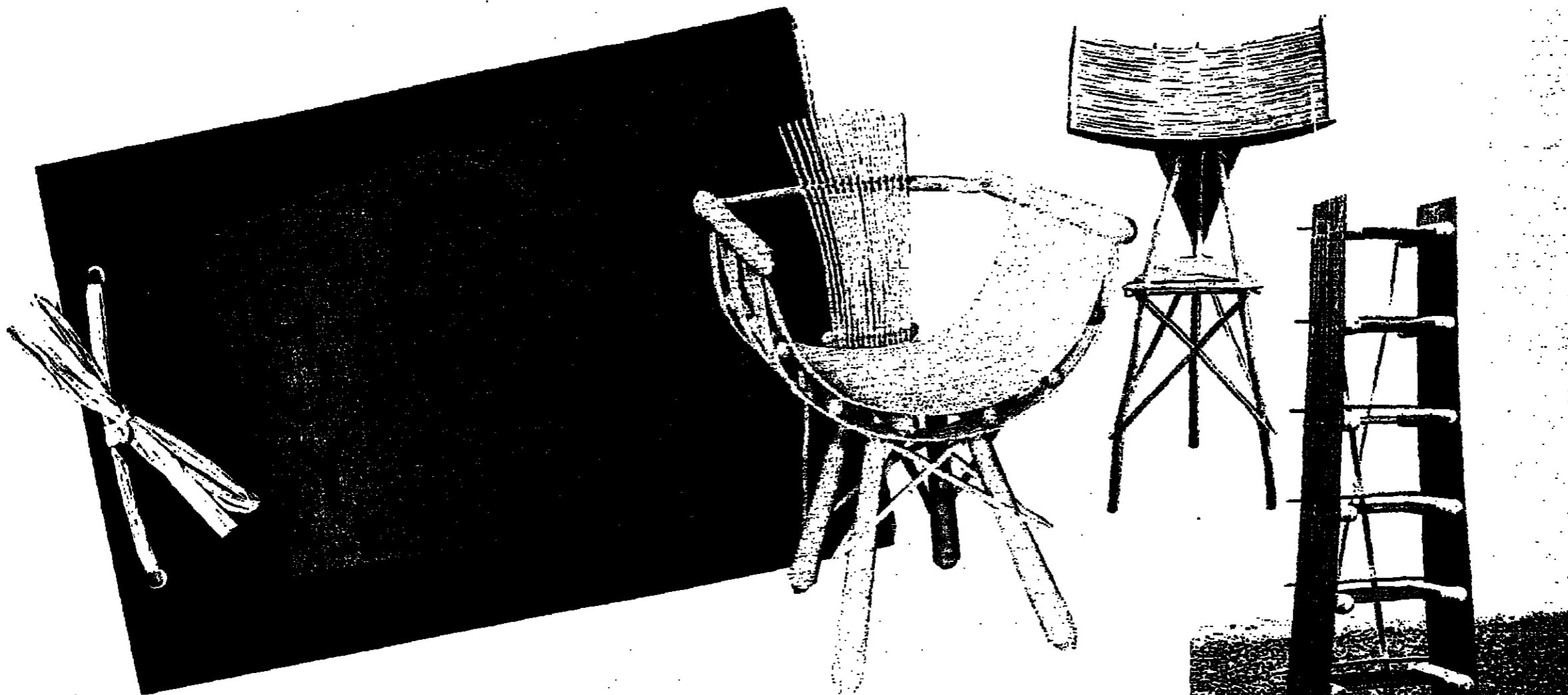
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HOW TO SPEND IT



Weaving a magic wand

Clive Fewins admires furniture made from ash and willow

Guy Martin tells the story of a general practitioner friend who commissioned him to design a practical but "different" consulting room chair. It had to do the basics, like provide for good posture. It also had to do something more abstract: make the doctor seem more comforting. Patients should be encouraged to regard the chair as part of the "healing process".

"It took me 2½ years to get it right," says Martin. But, he adds, "the development process produced a lot of ideas that I fed into other furniture designs, and a variant of the chair - I call it my 'cathedral' design - is now my best-selling item".

Martin has been developing his designs for three decades. In early autumn, he leaves his home each

week in a Somerset village on a foray to coppice ash in nearby woodlands. A little farther away, on the Somerset Levels, he buys willow from local grocers - either in batches with the bark left on, or in wands that have been boiled and stripped to a clean white colour.

From these primitive sources, Martin makes sculptural ash and willow furniture. Despite the cheap and rustic materials, his work is anything but traditional.

The shape of his chairs is minimalist. After spending most of his life as a designer, teacher and sculptor - 35 years as assistant to sculptor Sir Anthony Caro and six years as chief design tutor at John Makepeace's nearby Parnham College - one of his main objectives is to reduce his designs even more to essentials, to elemental shape.

"My aim is to get every aspect of the object correct," says Martin, 52. "This means understanding people's needs and producing a piece that is ecologically sustainable and naturally processed, made without resorting to chemical adhesives and in which every part of the design does a job."

Martin does not believe he has yet achieved this in all his designs. But it is only 2½ years since he started Guy Martin Furniture.

After leaving Parnham, he sold most of the woodworking machinery he had acquired. To make the chairs, stools, tables and other items that now sustain his one-man business, he decided to use only a bandsaw to shape the rough pieces of ash and an electric router to fit the willow seating and backs into the ash frame.

The ash spars are finished with an electric drum sander, but the rest of the work is done by hand. Martin will not use a lathe to turn the ash legs and spars. "A turned object loses its hand-made richness," he says.

He has rejected woven willow in his furniture, part of a conscious attempt to get away from using the material in a conventional way. The strength for which willow is noted is given to his rockers, recliners and dining chairs by a process he calls "dry lamination". All his chairs/seats have two skins of willow separated by ash batons, which create the curved element and give the seat its great strength. "The effect is that of a box girder bridge," says Martin.

Every element in his furniture is structural. Any aesthetic appeal comes from an appreciation of the

work each piece is doing. "People tell me my pieces have a Japanese feel, but I have never been to Japan," Martin says.

"Certainly they incorporate the Japanese ideas of honesty to materials, processes and needs. However, because it is not driven by aesthetics I think my furniture has more of a Shaker feel to it."

"I like to feel my chairs embrace the human form - they have arms, necks, heads, seats, legs and feet. On their own they have a human presence without a human being there." Whether or not Guy Martin's furniture strikes you as human, a piece of it does have a curiously healing effect.

Prices range from £275 to £575. Guy Martin Furniture is at Crown Studios, Old Crown Cottage, Greenham, Cricklade, Somerset TA18 8QE. Tel: 01309-865122.



Left to right:
 □ "Cathedral" chair, in coppiced ash and cultivated willow, £450
 □ Music stand/book stand/lectern, in ash and willow, £475
 □ "Stave" storage for 100 CDs, in ash and willow, £349

Fashion

Bold comfort for the sweater set

Designers are making trend-setters of classic cardigans and tank tops, writes Karen Wheeler

Knitwear is not what it used to be. "Traditionally a safe, easy purchase, now it is just as likely to be frivolous as functional. Who would have thought that the classic twin-set could become a trend-setter?"

Lainey Keogh helped push the boundaries of knitwear, by proving it could be worn for evening. Labels such as Malo, Lucien Pellat-Finet and Rebecca Moses have done for cashmere what Sir Terence Conran did for the sofa.

Before Pellat-Finet and Co. cashmere styling was pedestrian - a roll-neck sweater was as daring as it got. But now funky, striped sweaters, sexily cropped cardigans and camisoles, and bold use of colour are the norm. The two newest names to note, Martin Kidman and Sara Dearlove, have raised the game considerably.

Both have a good pedigree, having worked for Joseph Ettedgui on the highly successful Joseph Tricot range before starting their own collections. Their styles, however, could not be more different.

Kidman's knitwear has a more artistic and decorative feel. It comes in delicious

colours, with designs laced through with ribbons, delicately hand-embroidered with flowers or sprinkled with sequins. A typical garment is a lacy lilac top with a ribbon trim at the neck.

The appeal is in the detail: Kidman does belts, ribbons, buttons at the shoulder, or delicate ties that make all the difference, explains Paul

Kidman's cardigans are a must-have among the smart crowd living in Brompton Cross

Sexton, co-owner of Koh Samui in Covent Garden. The minutiae are carefully calculated, with lots of hand-finishing and exactly the right proportions and balance, says Manami Sloley, whose shop Tokio in Brompton Road was the first to stock Kidman's designs.

His little cardigans are a must-have among the smart

crowd who inhabit the fashionable Brompton Cross area of London (Tocca shift dress and tiny bag territory). Kidman has also been gaining a following among fashion cognoscenti. Kate Cashlaw, (Mrs Steven Spielberg), Courtney Love, and Helena Christensen - who once declared that the most wanted item in a woman's wardrobe was a Martin Kidman jumper - are all fans.

Kidman, 37, was snapped up by Ettedgui at his degree show for St Martin's School of Art in 1986. He worked at Joseph for 10 years, finally as design director for the Tricot range. He still makes the floral-patterned hand-craft style sweaters, synonymous with Tricot in the early 1980s, for private clients. Meanwhile, his own-label designs are wide-ranging and quintessentially English. He does everything from delicate camisoles to chunkier cable knits.

His recent winter collection was called Jackie O Goes To Aspen; his current spring/summer collection is inspired by the early 1980s and features tongue-in-cheek styles alongside the covetable lace hand-knits and refined cotton sweaters. These include one shoulder tops embellished with palm tree or Cadillac motifs and Joan Collins-inspired navy and fuchsia tops - not to everyone's taste, but amusing, nonetheless.

A visit to his showroom gives clues to his quirky style. It is not the usual

stark designer showroom but is exceptionally pretty with pale blue walls, a rose-patterned rug on the striped white floor and dainty antique chairs. Arranged artfully around are his junk shop finds.

Kidman - who is also knitwear consultant for high street retailer Jigsaw - always has an eye towards the next big thing. Though florals featured strongly in last summer's collection, he now pronounces himself sick of flowers. Instead, he sees a return to the romantic style

epitomised by Lady Diana Spencer in her Earl's Court flatshare days. That pie-crust frill shirt of the early 1980s suddenly looks absolutely right, he declares.

Sara Dearlove's knitwear is not as instantly arresting as Kidman's, but has connoisseur appeal. The Comme des Garçons of the knitwear world, her approach is esoteric, her garments complex. A typical design is a black or cream sweater of luxurious 8-ply cashmere, twisted seamlessly around the body to create an asymmetric effect.

Her small collection includes technically constructed pieces and shapes that have never been seen before. Her sweaters twist around the body in an unbroken rib, allowing her to abandon shoulder and side seams. In contrast to the styles that fit like a puz-

zle, she also does plain pieces reduced to complete simplicity. Rich-woman-in-a-ski-resort is how she describes the look.

Dearlove's most popular design is a long ribbed cardigan which hangs off the shoulders like a shawl and looks as if it has been made from one piece. Most of her designs come in taupe, cream or black; the designs are so complex it is best to stick to neutral colours, she explains, adding: "I will always have a crew neck and a V-neck in my collection, but they will not be like everybody else's." Her ambition is to create the perfect seamless cashmere sweater.

Like Kidman, Dearlove, 26, is a graduate of Central St Martin's. Upon graduation, she was immediately employed by Joseph Ettedgui after a tip-off from Andre Leon Tilly of American

Vogue. Dearlove was hired to work on the Tricot range, with the specific brief to reinterpret the famous Joseph rib.

Since then she has been hired as a consultant to the knitwear division of cult label Tocca (her influence will be seen in the autumn 1998 collection). Based in San Francisco, Dearlove is a name to remember.

Although not a knitwear specialist, Matthew Williamson also deserves a mention. His spring collection contains some of the best knitwear around. Sparkly twin-sets spun from delicate one-ply cashmere in orange, fuchsia, or white (pure Snow Queen) are irresistibly ultra-modern, as is his V-neck sleeveless tank in orange cashmere with fuchsia Lurex trim.

Received wisdom may be that, come the millennium,

we'll all don futuristic, sci-fi clothing. But it is the home-spun cardigan and sweater - going boldly forward in a comforting way - that are here to stay.

■ **Martin Kidman** at Tokio, 309 Brompton Rd, SW3 and Koh Samui, 65 Marmouth St, WC2. **Sara Dearlove** at Browns, 23-27 South Molton St, W1.

Photographer: Daniel Ward
 Stylist: Selma Levinson
 Model: Laura Roundell at Storm
 Make-up: Jane Bradley at the Wax
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OUTDOORS / PROPERTY

Gardening

Rain is good for growth - and slugs

Robin Lane Fox selects the plants which impressed him most in 1998

Two new years ago, I sat on horseback beside two practised farmers who were lamenting the vanishing level of water in nature and the damage to something called aquifers. Any self-respecting aquifer has had nothing to complain about. The long holiday season has been so unpredictable, so dark and so wet that our gardens are almost submerged as squiforous channels burst through the lawns, flower beds and anything which lies downhill.

Among the wet and the dark, I have been taking stock of the past extraordinary year and have decided that the key themes were slugs and growth. Once again, they confirm my long-held view that gardens and stock exchanges share an unrecognised relationship.

Like adventurous British investors, gardeners see their smaller prizes being cut back at ground level from mid-summer onwards while the old and trusted favourites have powered ahead, growing since July at a speed we have not seen for years. The mild rain has prolonged their exceptional progress and this spring will keep hedge-cutters on their toes.

The final impressions of the year are those which tend to last, but I also remember a heavenly phase of early spring, carpets of all types of narcissi in flower at once, sheets of anemone blanda opening in the sunshine and a good run of white flowers on the tall magnolias before frost in

April stopped them in their tracks. This early spring was more favoured than its predecessors because the frosts came later - at least south of Birmingham - and we all had a chance to enjoy camellias before a clear, cold night did serious damage.

Gardeners then complain that the rest of the year was cold and wet and nothing made serious progress. They are forgetting that, in 1998, borders and roses were once again a fortnight early and that old-fashioned roses had

I am one of the unfortunates who looks out on hedges over 20ft high of this beast

a wonderful window of opportunity before any rain damaged them in late June. Bedding plants were remarkably slow to make early progress as the soil stayed dry and nothing speeded into growth.

The great gainers were families which like quite a heavy rainfall in early summer if they are to flower freely from August onwards. I had some wonderful shows of flower on the crocosmias whose varieties have multiplied in catalogues during the past 10 years. Many more of us now know the orange-yellow Solferato and

the very pretty Norwich Canary, but I have spread the net much wider into the hanging dark red flowers of one called Mrs Geoffrey Howard and a fine flower called Seven Sunrises.

Crocosmias have been great beneficiaries of the recent warm winters and as many of them appreciate rainfall during the growing season, they put on an excellent show in August.

Later in the season, the same causes worked even better effects on the many varieties of Kafir Lily or Schizostylis. Like the crocosmia, this family is grouped among the relations of the iris, but it does not start to flower until early September. They continue well into November, when the first frosts and rains spoil the flower buds. Before then, all the varieties will flower abundantly in rather poor soil which has been soaked with rain earlier in the summer.

Here, too, named varieties have been multiplying, but the best of the many I have collected is the excellent red coccinea which is also one of the easiest to find in catalogues. Six years ago, I planted mine in the blank squares left between paving stones and I have found that this site suits them admirably. Their rusky leaves soon spread and the flowers project forwards at the modest height of a foot or so as they reach out into the sun. A mild December brought most of these varieties back for a second bout of flower.

Evergreen shrubs have accelerated in the mild wet weather since September



Althea cannabina (left) and Schizostylis coccinea: flowering in late August and from September onwards, respectively



A-Z Botanical Garden Picture Library

and I never remember such progress on three of my favourites, the best escallonia, including Gwendolyn Anley, the variegated rhamnus which is my all-time favourite against a wall, and the hardy and reliable Osmanthus Burkwoodii which makes such an excellent and unusual type of hedge.

If you are hesitating about planting strategic evergreens, take heart from the rapid progress of these varieties in the past year. They all respond to a surface dressing of an artificial fertiliser on to the bare ground

around their roots from April onwards. The cheap and potent choice here is a bag of dried blood, which is then washed into the soil by rains which fall from late April onwards. Together with the recent deluge in British weather, this dressing has sent my older hedges racing away after years of drought.

What is good for a classy evergreen is even better for the monstrous feathery Leylandii Cypress whose hedges have been the subject of such national abomination. I am one of the unfortunates who looks out on hedges of this beast which are over 30ft high, and I have to report that the second half of 1998 saw hardly credible rates of growth both forwards and upwards on old trees which I believed to have been tamed by heavy

cutting only three years ago. It will cost several hundred pounds again this spring to strip the brutes to a temporary standstill and try to restore a degree of order. If you have these monsters near you, check them again this spring because they really have accelerated in recent months.

At a lower level, I am pleased to look back on particular successes. At Chelsea Flower Show, I was one of the many who fastened on to the specialist displays of various types of half-hardy perennial Nemesis. I chose these plants for some of the low beds in prominent places in Oxford and can only endorse the enthusiasm of their breeders, who claim that they spread and flower throughout the summer and autumn.

Many more varieties will

be coming on this year, but I have had fantastic value from these free-flowering small bedding plants and recommend them all when they turn up again in May.

At a different height altogether, I have also been delighted by an old favourite. I owe it to the writings of the great Edwardian plantsman, E.A. Bowles, who describes it as "one of the best of the mallows... a goodly possession which grows 12ft or more and is wonderfully elegant and light in its branching". It is a type of wild hollyhock with leaves like a plant of cannabis, but nobody has yet arrested the neglected Althea Cannabina. It is a plant for late August - outstandingly light and emphatic and an absolute winner in any flower bed which needs a lift.

The little flowers come in dozens and are a reddish pink on thin stalks, but the entire plant is transparently slender and airy so it does not block the view to lower subjects around it. Mine stopped happily at 4ft and despite advice, I never bothered to stake them. They are one of those overlooked architectural plants for late summer which will grow anywhere, make an impact in groups, or only one at a time, and puzzle both experts and non-gardeners who mistake them for what they are not.

Not all the best plants are new and it always pays to read the experts from earlier this century. So much that is new keeps flooding us that we fail to pick up on existing observations made long before when choices were fewer.

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On the Move

Let the vendor beware

Anne Spackman on proposals to change the house-buying system

A refreshingly consumer-friendly response to the government's proposed changes to the house-buying system in England and Wales has been published by the National Association of Estate Agents.

It not only supports the general thrust of the government's proposals, but suggests they go much further. Most fundamentally, it recommends abandoning the principle of caveat emptor - let the buyer beware - in favour of caveat venditor.

Last month the UK government produced a consultation paper aimed at tackling the slowness and inefficiency of the present house-buying system. It recommended that much of the information obtained by the buyer after an offer has been agreed should be obtained by the vendor before the property goes on the market.

The key aim is to reduce the time between offers being agreed and contracts exchanged, when many deals fall through.

The reaction of a number of estate agents and property organisations has been that the system ain't broke, so it don't need fixing. A typical response comes from Fenslope Court of the central London agents, Beauchamp Estates: "The proposals could set up obstacles to the smooth handling of a process that has worked efficiently for many years."

Some members of the National Association of Estate Agents might agree, but their report takes a very different view, as it is based on work by Tim Kaye of Birmingham University, an independent legal academic. He describes the existing system in terms more familiar to the buying and selling public: "It would appear to be highly defective and in need of root and branch review."

Kaye says the system is



dogged by uncertainty, delay and distrust. The key problem is that offers agreed "subject to contract" have no legal standing. Buyers and sellers can withdraw at any point up to the date of written exchange of contracts - and often do.

Kaye's solution is similar to the government's, only more radical. He believes selling homes should be like selling other goods, with the seller legally required to be open and honest. The principle that the buyer should be responsible for digging up any defects in the property is at the root of the problem, he argues.

His solution is to adopt a system based on that used in New South Wales, Australia. There, the vendor has to produce a pack which includes among other things a contract of sale, draft plans, a local authority search and details of any boundary disputes. This is the essence of the government's proposals.

Kaye would also require vendors to provide a survey. He argues that this is the only remaining cause of

delays in the NSW system. Even without it, he says, gazumping has virtually disappeared and legal disputes have proved rare.

The issue of vendor surveys has produced the strongest response from the property industry. Many have argued that buyers will not believe surveys produced for sellers. Kaye says buyers, as borrowers, already accept the surveys done for lenders. Moreover, he argues that negligent surveyors are already liable to both buyer and seller.

Kaye says he appreciates the problems involved in transplanting ideas from one country to another, but with the housing market and the legal system in NSW very similar to those in England and Wales, he says it should be possible. He has produced a draft bill based on the NSW Conveyancing Act and the UK Sale of Goods Act 1979.

The bill includes provision for the future establishment of a system of public notaries to handle property transactions, as happens in many European countries, including France and Germany. Kaye accepts that this is an idea for the long-term and that he has given the government and the industry quite enough to be going on with for now.

Christmas Crossword solution

DEPOSITARY	PRECOLLEGE
R A P O R H O E P A	EXTOL CHAMELEON SWISS
S H I O S D O S O C T	SAFETYMATCH SLEPTHERE
E L E V O T N H N R	DANGLE BERTHA SCOOTER
P R E D O S N T U R O	UNCONCEIVE ASMODEUS
R K U S Q T V B	OSLO TWOQUEENS EDGE
B O S L I A N F L S C	B E M O T E S T S I M P L I F I E R S
I E H G S E A E I	D O R M I C E R O U C O U C R O N I N
E C M I A N F L R S C	G R I M A L K I N E X T R A P O L A T E
R L M H D V R O H L R	O P E R A D E S P E R A D O N I A M I
O S T C O N D O D O T	M A S T E R M I N D S E A N O C A S E Y

Winners: Allison Chisholm, Birkdale, Merseyside; J.R. Osborne, Ashtead, Surrey; J.M. Rogers, Cross Hills, W. Yorkshire.

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Grooming is so smart in Colorado

Ann Wilson

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GREECE

CRETE

CARIBBEAN

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SAFARI

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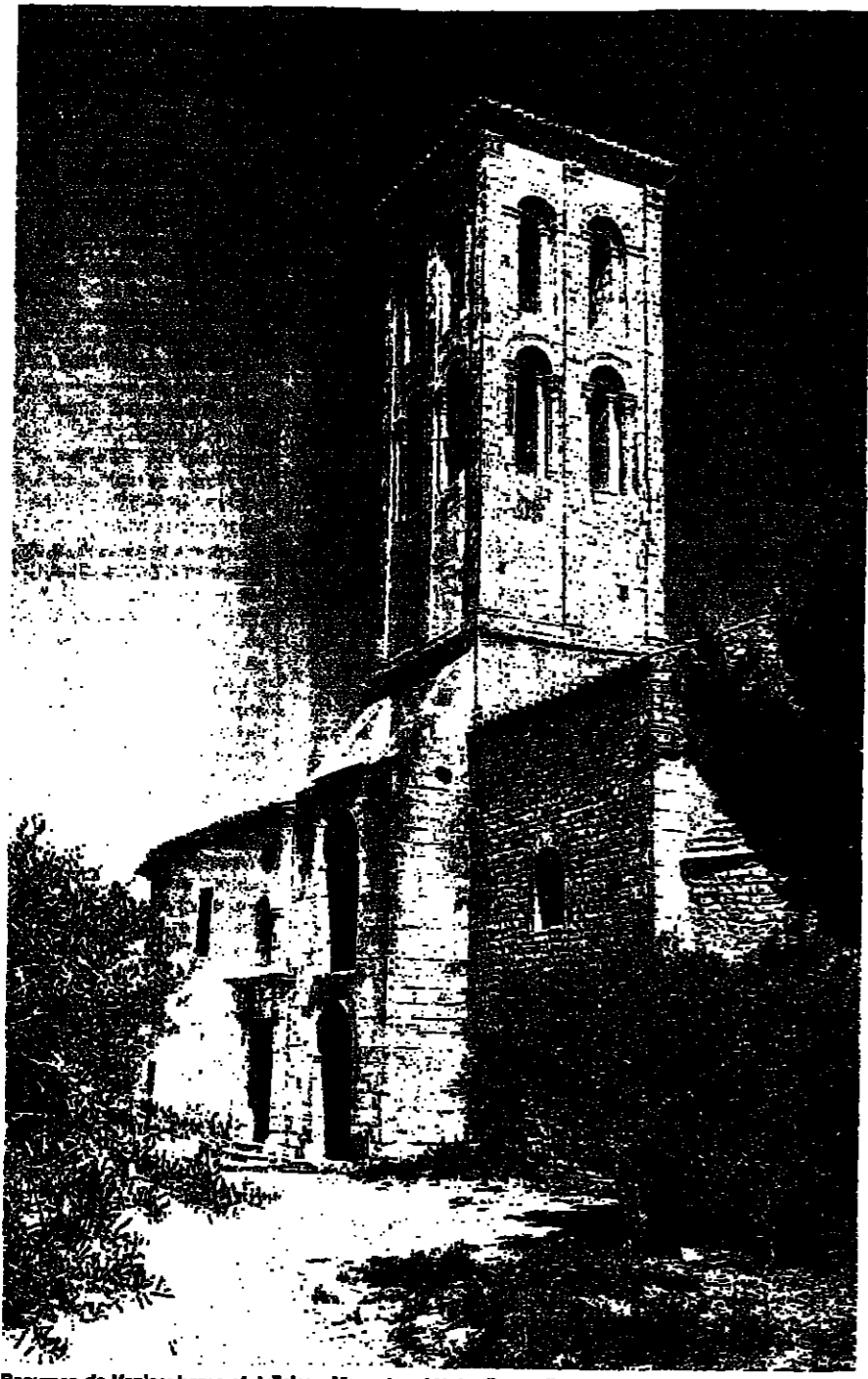
AUSTRALIA

BALANCE

TRAVEL

The popes had a point when it came to aperitifs

Nicholas Woodsworth relishes the region of France where he's made his home



Beaumes-de-Venise: home of delicious Muscat and Notre Dame d'Aubagne church

What is it about Provence - apart from 2,500 hours of sunshine a year - that makes it so alluring? The question for me was not an idle one. Twenty years ago I had chosen to live here.

There are, of course, any number of places of great southern charm stretching across Europe from Portugal to Greece. All are bathed in sunshine and ineffable Mediterranean light. All make greater or lesser claims for their landscapes, their stone farmhouses, their goat's cheese, their beautiful women and a host of other felicitous things. One could go on making such lists indefinitely.

Yet I could not explain in any succinct or comprehensive fashion what it was that made this particular place so attractive to me.

Such were my perplexities not long ago as I sat, a mid-morning *petit-dejeuner* in hand, at the top of the Dentelles de Montmirail. The Dentelles are one of my favourite places in Provence. Striking formations of silvery-grey rock, they rise precipitously out of the plain on the edge of the Rhône Valley in the *département* of the Vaucluse. From here the views are nothing less than transporting.

"Dentelles" means lace, and I can see the reason for the name - the 300ft vertical

spine of rocks that runs along the top of this densely forested massif is so delicate, so thin and finely worked by aeons of erosion that it can indeed bring lace to mind.

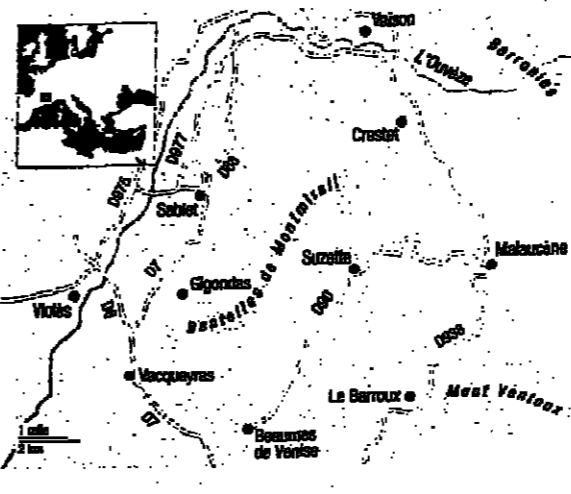
High in a rocky cranny, I gazed over northern Provence. Away through the milky air, across a flat Rhône Valley drenched in soft sunshine, I could see the hills of the Cevennes.

To the north-east lay the rugged Barronies - the first of a set of ever rougher foothills climbing to the Alps. Behind me rose the silhouette of 6,000ft Mont Ventoux, the highest peak in Provence.

Everywhere else, lapping at these prominences like a sea on fire, stretched endless vineyards that in this season wore brilliant tones of red and gold.

In such weather, I thought, I could sit and simply gaze for days. Autumn was a good time for such laziness. The hectic round of summer festivals was over, the crowds of visitors had gone home, the all-important grape harvest was safely in. Balm and basking, the whole land lay in a kind of satisfied quiescence. I could easily do the same.

On the other hand, I reflected, I could make the 35-mile tour of the country roads that encircle the Dentelles. It is one of the prettiest circuits around. Somewhere down there, perhaps, lay the answer to my ques-



tion. Brushing away the last buttery crumbs of pastry, I made my way to Gigondas, the small village that lay below the rocks.

Gigondas is old. The ruins of its stone citadel, its ramparts, hospice and monastery all speak of a medieval past. But its name, a derivation of the Latin *joconditas*, or happiness, speaks of even older origins. Like Vaison-la-Romaine, some 10 miles to the north on the Dentelles circuit, Gigondas was settled by the Romans.

Why happiness? Perhaps because while Vaison was a busy garrison town - these days it is a delightful place of street-markets and music-festivals - Gigondas was settled by retired Roman soldiers who devoted themselves to wine. They established a reputation for inspired wine-making early on - Pliny the Elder mentions them in his first-century "Natural History". The village has not looked back since. Today, of Gigondas's 700 villagers, 650 are still in the business.

Off I drove southward through the vineyards, past wine-cellar and sturdy, foursquare Provençal farmhouses, past olive groves and shady stands of Mediterranean pines. The road was quiet and, apart from the occasional pop of a distant boar-hunter's gun in the Dentelles hills above me, so too was the countryside. Even Vaqueyras, the next town down the road, lay somnolent in the sunshine.

It is not always so. Every July, Vaqueyras is the site of an exuberant wine festival that takes over the town. On the main square, tables are laid in the shade of plane trees and vast meals are served *à fresco* to hundreds of celebrants.

In every narrow, winding street, stands are set up for the free and unlimited consumption of Côtes du Rhône wines. One simply grabs a glass and, amid music, merrymaking and dancing, sips

one's way across the town. Multiple crossings are not unknown.

Three miles past Vaqueyras, I grabbed a glass of my own. There can be few better aperitif times than Beaumes-de-Venise. Its Muscat is as close as anything I know to nectar. The popes of Avignon thought so, too: in the 14th century they purchased their own vineyard here. In the town's wine co-operative I sampled three different amber-coloured Muscats. Liquid sunshine, they were

The Dentelles looked very beautiful and very undiscovered

all so good I came away with bottles of each.

A good aperitif deserves a good lunch. A short drive from Beaumes around the bottom of the Dentelles brought me to the village of Le Barroux. Which was the more impressive, its *château* or its restaurant? I am not sure. The massive 12th century castle on the top of the hill was ornate and preceded by extravagant watchtowers. My meal at the charming *Les Geraniums*, a *brouffado d'agneau à l'Avignonnaise* - stew of lamb, green olives and preserved orange - was also ornate. It, too, was preceded by extravagance - a terrine of multi-coloured layers of tomato, black olive and parsley omelette.

In the restaurant parking lot I met Janet Norton, a modern Freya Stark who, equipped with walking stick, pack and a stout pair of shoes, was researching a book on walking in Provence. What did she think I asked, of the many trails that criss-cross the forests of the Dentelles?

Norton, I had the impression, likes to be one of the first explorers to reconnoitre a region. Peter Mayle's books were unfortunate, she replied - the British had discovered Provence. It was all the more surprising, then, that the Dentelles walking trails had not been discovered. They remain, she affirmed, very beautiful.

I desisted from remarking that when it came to back-country incursions by foreign scribblers, Peter Mayle could be regarded as an absolute late-comer; in the 14th century the Italian poet Petrarch had made the ascent of Mont Ventoux and written about it.

But Norton was right, I thought, as I drove up into the Dentelles massif to the hamlet of Suzette. From the high, isolated, end-of-the-world spur on which Suzette sits, the Dentelles looked very beautiful and very undiscovered indeed - forests of pine, oak and the aromatic Mediterranean undergrowth known as *garrigue* stretched into the distance. No matter what sophistication lies on the other side of these hills, it is still possible to get seriously lost here.

By the time I reached Crestet, a couple of miles from Vaison and near the end of my circuit, I thought I might have at least part of the answer to my question. Relatively unknown, Crestet is one of the most enchanting and best-preserved medieval hill-villages in all Provence. Strolling through its steep and crooked stone streets, I saw that barely a false note was struck here. Built of local materials and arranged along the natural contours of the hillside, everything - church, houses, fountains, squares, arcades - fitted together in a wonderfully integrated whole.

And that, it seemed to me, is what makes the Dentelles and many other parts of Provence so alluring. It is not a question of lists of many separate things, but the fact that these things fit in immediate juxtaposition and still fit beautifully together.

Men have lived here for thousands of years, exploiting this land intensively. Yet in this mix of the natural and the cosmopolitan, the wild and the civilised - mountains, music festivals, vineyards, *châteaux*, street-markets, *garrigue* and all the rest - nothing overwhelms anything else.

There is some sort of genius there. Add to it a lot of sunshine, I thought as I drove home to my own little village, and you have somewhere to live.

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Kaye says the system is only remaining cause of...

TRAVEL

The Spanish town became bigger, but it never wholly lost the aristocratic cachet it possessed at birth. Giles MacDonogh explains why

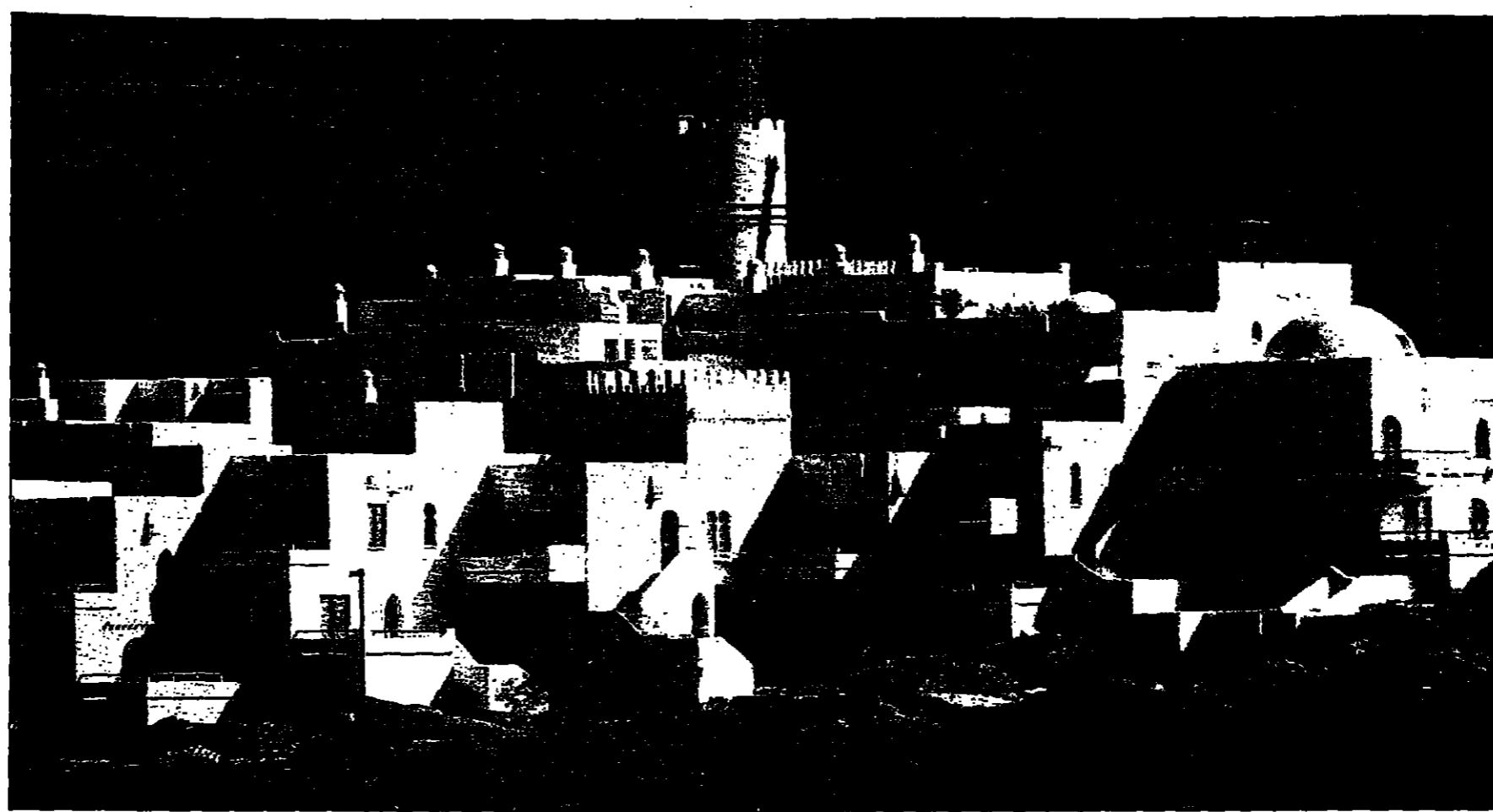
It is not given to many people to have the main street of a large town renamed in their honour: even fewer receive that accolade in their own lifetimes. Nelson Mandela is certainly already the dedicatee of several boulevards, but with the exception of Prince Alfonso de Hohenlohe in Marbella, I am hard-pressed to offer you any others.

Hohenlohe is very much alive and busy. I met him at his finca near the Andalusian town of Ronda. He lives between there and Mexico in hyperactive retirement. When he is in Spain he is just 1½ hours' drive from Marbella, the town he created half a century ago.

The prince is the product of a more genteel Europe which was shaken by one world war, and all but wiped out by another. The high-sounding name originated in German Franconia, but his branch of the Hohenlohe-Langenbergs lived in Bohemia until Czech nationalists and communists drove them from their land after 1945.

He was fortunate in having strong links with Spain and his family not only possessed a finca near El Escorial, but they also owned the old Málaga wine firm of Scholtz Hermanos. His mother was the daughter of the Mexican ambassador to Vienna and Hohenlohe's father met her at a ball there in the 1820s. When a child was born he was named after King Alfonso XIII, and a Battenberg princess was appointed as a godmother.

After the war the Spanish inheritance came into its own. One now famous day in 1946, Hohenlohe and his uncle Ricardo Soriano were



Marbella: northern Europeans came for the winter, Spaniards for the summer, and it just got bigger and bigger

travelling from Gibraltar and Málaga in a Rolls-Royce powered by a charcoal burner. They stopped on the road and went for a swim.

There was an old farmhouse but otherwise nothing. Instantly, however, they saw its potential. Soriano bought the house and Hohenlohe convinced his father that Andalucía would be a far better place to spend the summer than San Sebastián, where the weather was capricious and it occasionally rained. They sold off the cellars in Málaga and invested the money they obtained by building the first house in "Marbella".

In its initial incarnation, Marbella resembled a new Marlenbad: an exclusively aristocratic watering hole. The displaced grandees of Mitteleuropa were the first

to come: Bismarcks and Metternichs fed up with post-war austerity. At first they stayed in the house as paying guests, but as Marbella gained in popularity they ran out of room. Hohenlohe's house was sold to the Rothschilds and the farmhouse was turned into a hotel - the famous Marbella Club.

"They came in waves," says Prince Alfonso.

After the noblemen, it was the Gibraltarians, who wintered in the new resort during the 1950s. They were succeeded by *piados nortios* (rich colonists from French and Spanish north Africa), the English and the Arabs. Hohenlohe counts it as a personal coup that he managed to lure in the crown prince - now king - of Saudi Arabia in 1970, finding him suitable



Prince Alfonso: keeping busy

accommodation at the last moment.

The prince liked Marbella and later constructed a replica of the White House for himself and surrounded it by a huge park. Hohenlohe jokes: "The Catholic kings

(Ferdinand and Isabella) turn the Arabs out, Alfonso de Hohenlohe brings them back."

Marbella got bigger and bigger, but it never wholly lost the aristocratic cachet it possessed at its birth. Northern Europeans came for the winter, Spaniards for the summer. In the 1950s, Hohenlohe created his first "disco" in the Beach Club, where he was later to introduce stereophonic sound to Marbella at Tuesday and Friday night revues. Until then, music had been live: "People simply couldn't believe their ears."

It was a success. Hohenlohe attributed it to "the style, the gardens, the security and the climate". Hotels were starting up all over the new town. The Horcher family, the most famous restaurateurs of the Third Reich, came out of exile in Madrid to open La Fonda. By 1978, however, Hohenlohe's vision had gone out of control. He sold out and 15 years ago he bought the estate near Ronda. At a safe distance he could watch the developments and the most recent waves. The Russians have been the latest, blazing a trail involving some death and a little destruction.

More controversial is the mayor, Jesus Gil, who seems anxious to restore the imbalance in the town's budget by making the last of Marbella's green spaces available for building. No one appears to know how many people live there, but estimates are in excess of 100,000. The resort is losing its exclusiveness; the actor Sean Connery is

one of those selling. I asked Hohenlohe what he thought of all this. He shrugged and smiled, but he was clearly concerned: "Marbella is like my son. I don't want to spoil my son."

He has other concerns now. There are his vines, 50 acres (20 hectares) around his country house. Some time after he moved up to Ronda, Hohenlohe was visited by the wine-making Marquis de Griñón.

Like Hohenlohe in 1946, Griñón saw possibilities. On the advice of the oenologist Michel Rolland, soil samples were dispatched to the University of Bordeaux. The scientists were impressed and in 1991 Hohenlohe set out to make his own version of his favourite wine: the first growth Château Cheval Blanc in Saint Emilion.

There were problems at first. His first Tempranillo, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Petit Verdot and Syrah plants were held up by customs on the French border. Hohenlohe had just celebrated his latest wedding, an event which had been given considerable space in the gossip magazine *Hola!*. When the officer heard Prince Alfonso's name he stood to attention: "That Prince Hohenlohe!" The vines continued their journey to Andalucía.

In 1992, Hohenlohe already had 10,000 litres of wine: the first to be made since phylloxera destroyed Ronda's vineyards a century before. Last year he made 110,000. I was sceptical about this strange "Saint Emilion" aged in old Margaux barrels in the wilds of Andalucía, but I had to drink my words. Both the 1996 and the 1998 were rich, sinewy, distinguished wines. The 1996 is the better of the two, with a lot more staying power than the 1998; but then, neither is exactly sweet.

The wine venture has paid off. Already the Madrid-based Club des Gourmets has purchased a quarter of his stock and he has opened a restaurant on his estate where visitors can enjoy the wine along with Hohenlohe's own ewes' milk cheese, olive oil, ham, wild boar and partridges.

You would have thought that the vineyard was sufficient for a retirement project, but no. Hohenlohe is looking at the other side of Andalucía: to the unspoilt coast of sherry country and Sanlúcar de Barrameda. Here he hopes to open three hotels in the immediate future: one in the port, with its associations with Christopher Columbus, and two in the country on land reclaimed from grubbed-up vineyards complete with golf courses and tennis courts.

If this latest dream comes true, who knows? He might get a boulevard in Sanlúcar too.

For inquiries about Hohenlohe's wines, or the restaurant, call +34 95 11 41 31 or 95 21 65 201. GB Airways (tel: 0990-111666) flies to Málaga from London Gatwick and Heathrow from £175 return and to Gibraltar from Gatwick from £180 return.

The prince of Marbella

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Motoring

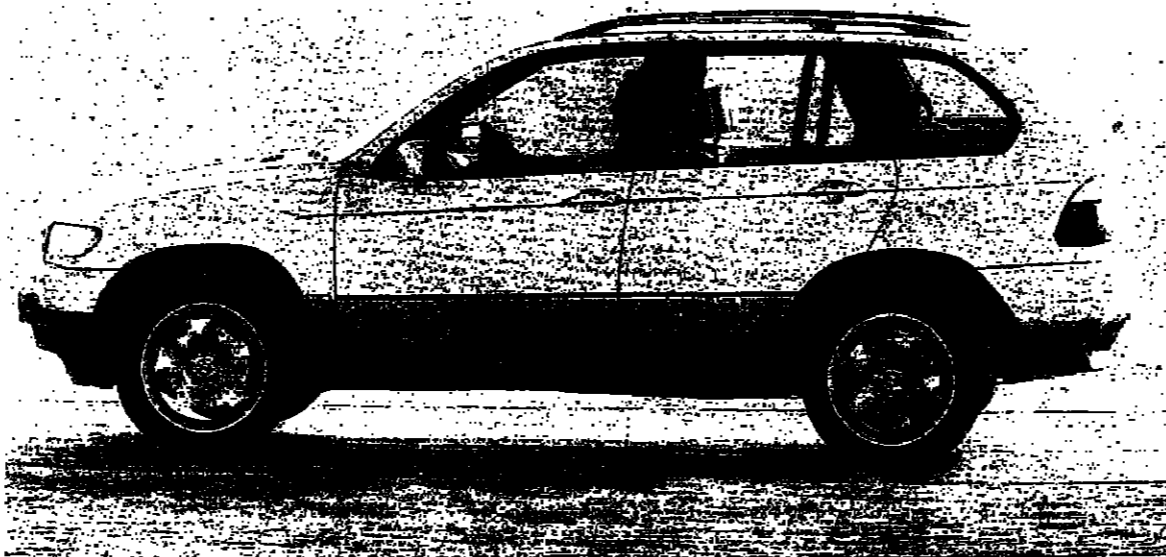
Country cars for thrusting townies

Stuart Marshall on 4 x 4s that are a far cry from the old toughies

Tow simple life used to be when there were only two kinds of four-wheel drive vehicle. There were rough, tough, working types for farmers, and tarty-up recreational versions for people who fancied driving something that smacked of broad acres, even though they would be used in exactly the same way as normal cars.

The rough toughies still exist but form a tiny minority. Most 4 x 4s are now niche vehicles, bought as alternatives to all kinds of car, from luxury saloon to roomy estate, family hatch-back to sporty two-seater.

Towards the end of last year several new 4 x 4s (Land Rover New Discovery and Jeep New Grand Cherokee among them) made their bow, and there are signs the rush will continue this year. Manufacturers, or at any rate their advertising agencies, continue to promote the idea that all 4 x 4s



BMW's American-built X5: a 4 x 4 sports activity vehicle little bigger than a 3-Series saloon but with real off-road capability

seen on press launches and similar off-roading jollies. Most other manufacturers adopted independent front suspension to smooth the on-road ride and make handling more like a car than a truck. But change is in the air. With the Freelander, which it admits is aimed at owners who will spend all, or nearly all, their time driving on hard roads, Land Rover broke away from its only-beam-axes-will-do philosophy.

Freelander still looks more or less like a proper off-road vehicle, but rides and handles on road like a normal car. So do the Subaru Forester and its bigger brother, the Legacy Outback, which tackle the problem the other way round. They are proper estate cars, but have all-wheel drive and enough ground clearance for as much off-roading as most owners have in mind.

The US-built Mercedes M-class on-off road vehicle, which comes to Britain in a few weeks, has fully inde-

pendent suspension and, I am told, ride comfort and road performance generally closer to what one expects of a Mercedes saloon than any rival 4 x 4. (I shall find out for myself later this month.)

Its off-road mobility depends on all-wheel drive with electronic systems that curb wheelspin and allocate power to the tyres with most grip. In extremis, a beam-axled Land Rover Discovery or Jeep Grand Cherokee might well leave an M-class floundering - but is this important to 99 per cent of customers? Mercedes thinks not.

BMW has similar customers in mind for its latest product, the X5 sports activity vehicle, which makes its debut at the Detroit motor show today, goes on sale in the US by the end of this year and reaches Britain in summer 2000.

It has all-wheel drive and electronic hill descent control (pioneered by Land Rover in the Freelander) for off-roading but its habitat will be the country club, not

Deals on Wheels Just forget the niggles

For under £40,000 and with 50,000 miles on the clock there is no better buy than a Bentley Turbo R. An Audi A8 2.8, BMW 735, Jaguar XJ6 4.0 and Mercedes S-class 2.8 all cost more now and these are the poverty models; even the cheapest Range Rover is more.

Not that I would recommend the Turbo R as an everyday car. You would soon find the running costs enough to understand the attraction of continental rivals. If the annual mileage could be kept below 7,500, the mathematics start to make sense. Fuel consumption, that most visible of expenses, would not be cause for complaint if depreciation were discussed.

Nobody would be rash enough to claim this Bentley will not lose further value, but it will do so at a steeper rate than anything more modern. Insurance can be cheap on a limited mileage basis and maintenance can be contained if a reputable (but not franchised) dealer is used.

What will the money buy you? A truly magnificent car that will cost you in quiet comfort, although no longer in clock-ticking silence - that died with quartz and aluminium engines giving high output sufficient to move a heavy car at inordinate speeds. The highest quality leather from Scandinavian cows covers large areas and there's a silky swathe of burr walnut from Italy. To see the wood when there are no instruments in the dashboard is a triumph of craftsmanship. Few appreciate the subtlety of the mirror image wood and its individuality.

Luxury notwithstanding, there are some irritants. Wind noise can stifle a conversation and leather's low friction might mean passengers bump into each other. All this will only happen though at the illegal speeds this car can reach.

The chassis was never designed for the inputs the Turbo R is capable of and it often complains as it goes about its work. The car is, of course, sizeable and could be a tight fit for the garage.

Nevertheless forget all the niggles. Buy it and enjoy the car for what it is. Sit in traffic jams noticing how uncomfortable and small all the other cars seem. Adjust the sound system to drown out the few remaining external distractions.

Destroy a young upstart in his GTI with the R's breathtaking performance or just allow him to think he is superior.

You may not admire this car's looks but you will love its abilities. Start a journey tired and end it relaxed.

Anthony Cazalet

An unexpected - even poignant - spotlight was thrown on boxing in the UK's New Year Honours List. Both world featherweight champion Naseem Hamed and his former trainer, Brendan Ingle, were awarded the MBE, with Ingle's citation mentioning "services to disadvantaged young people" at his gym in a blue-collar suburb of Sheffield, in northern England.

The most celebrated of Ingle's protégés is undoubtedly Hamed. As the seven-year-old son of poor Yemeni immigrants to the tough steel town, Hamed was already an accomplished street-fighter when Ingle introduced him to the ring. Seventeen years later, the champion is unbeaten in 31 fights - including 28 knock-outs - and a multi-millionaire.

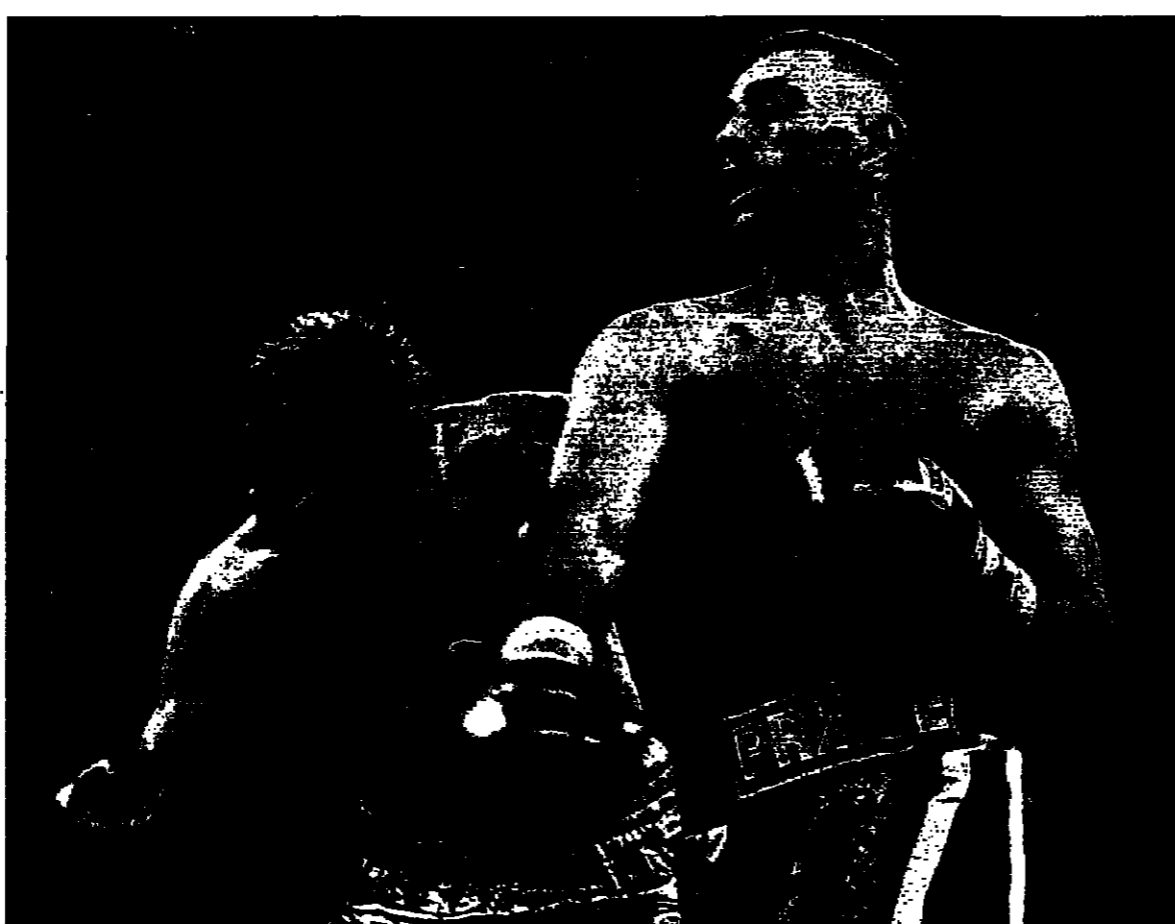
In the past, commentators have fallen over themselves to praise Hamed's speed, strength and aggression, while fight fans have rated him the most exciting boxer at his weight that Britain has seen. His cool, street-smart style has made him, at the age of 24, an icon for millions of young people and brought the sport a new audience. In Middle Eastern countries, Hamed is the best-known sportsman in the world.

However, what the government's advisers could not have foreseen was that two weeks before the announcement of his honours, Ingle and Hamed would part company when a simmering feud became an acrimonious divorce. Two men who had been like father and son, conquering the world together, parted on bad terms.

Obviously it was about money. Ingle was aggrieved that his £75,000 trainer's bill for a fight in New Jersey last autumn was still unpaid. In reality, both sides were growing apart. Hamed seeking independence, as young men do, Ingle finding it tough to see 30 years of experience ignored.

The publication of *The Paddy and The Prince: The Making of Naseem Hamed*, by boxing writer Nick Pitt was probably the final straw. Ingle had given Pitt generous access to his thoughts and memories, and although the best-selling book was far from one-sided, to impartial readers Hamed came across as something of a brat.

However, the boxer has more pressing problems. He is scheduled to defend his title in March and at present has no trainer. After the



The boxer still known as Prince fighting Wayne McCullough, in Atlantic City in October last year

Boxing

Profit and honours

But Naseem Hamed's career is coming apart, says Keith Wheatley

split with Ingle, the gym where he has trained every day of his adult life is no longer open to him. The Hamed brothers who now form Naseem's "management entourage" say an American trainer has been signed, but will give no details.

Hamed's last few fights have been lacklustre affairs, with the champion struggling to prevail. His next match, against an as yet unknown opponent, needs to be significant if he is to re-establish his momentum.

"He's at a crisis point in his career," says former world champion and Sky TV commentator Barry McGuigan. "He needs to excite people again and he can only do that by fighting dangerous opponents. Naz badly needs to reaffirm his position."

"I think he's got carried away with his own importance and started to believe his own hype. Plus [there is] the oldest problem in boxing when the mean, hungry fighter becomes the rich young man about town and loses his appetite for the game. He'll need a good trainer."

Ingle, for one, will not be tempted back. "Naz started going off the rails about four years ago," he says, "neglecting his technique, especially

footwork and movement. He just wanted to knock everybody out, banging them about. I don't need it any more. I've plenty of good young fighters coming on."

With Ingle out of the picture, one might expect Hamed to be looking to promoter Frank Warren to provide continuity in his young life and career. However, relations between the two are strained since last October's fight against Wayne McCullough in Atlantic City.

There was a muddle over entry visas which kept the boxer delayed in London for two days, for which Hamed blamed Warren. Feelings grew so sour that Warren threatened to return to England just 48 hours before the bout.

Hamed's camp is unwilling to say whether it will be working with Warren in future. Riath Hamed, Naseem's older brother, sim-

Michael Thompson-Noel World soccer boss puts it in the net

Sapp Blatter, the boss of Fifa, world soccer's ruling body, is the man likely to make most headlines when the tired old business of 20th century sport is elbowed aside by the shiny, pushy meta-business of 21st century sport next January 1.

This week, Blatter suggested that soccer's World Cup finals, which are the showcase for the planet's most successful sport, be staged biennially, rather than once every four years. The suggestion provoked squawks of incredulity, but Blatter's critics gravely underestimate their man.

There are two reasons why soccer has become the most popular sport on earth: 1) it is a truly fine game, to watch and to play; 2) at Fifa's level it has been managed by men of intelligence.

Initially, Blatter indicated he wanted the first of his biennial World Cup tournaments in 2002, with regional qualifying events in odd-numbered years. But he has had to change his tune, to make clear he does not want the World Cup to collide with the summer Olympics, which are staged every four years, in even-numbered years.

There is now speculation that if the two-year format is approved, the World Cup finals will be staged in all odd-numbered years. "One can start changing the calendar from 2005 on," Blatter said in Zurich on Wednesday, after a visit with Olympic president Juan Antonio Samaranch. And he agreed that it would have to be seen whether "society can digest this amount of football".

Blatter's boldness has

reopened old battles between Fifa and the regional soccer bodies for control of the soccer calendar, and of money and power. But the plan also increases the pressure on other sports, major and minor, including the Olympics, to get their houses in order so they can compete efficiently for international sponsorship and TV money against the planetary juggernaut that is soccer.

The top men at Uefa, which runs European soccer, were snuffy at the way Blatter is out-gunning them. Uefa's general secretary, Gerhard Aigner, said that Blatter's plan could have financial repercussions. "Economically, the market is not inexhaustible," he whined. "We cannot eternally expand, hoping to multiply the profits."

People who watch too much soccer often talk like that. But there are hundreds of millions of them, and they will not be denied.

□ □ □

In Australia, they are squabbling about who should open the Sydney Olympics in 2000. Kim Beazley, leader of the opposition, thinks the honour should go to Australia's governor-general, Sir William Deane, while prime minister John Howard thinks he should open the games. My own peace-keeping suggestion is that the 2000 Olympics be opened by Miss Queensland.

This might strain relations between Queensland and New South Wales, where Sydney is located. But it has to be stated that Miss Queensland is always a stupendous natural marvel.

How to punt it

Sports betting is becoming popular: a trend that will be magnified as the digital and interactive TV revolutions take a grip. Sports betting means betting on sports other than horse and dog racing - soccer, for example.

One of the features of soccer betting is that the odds sometimes change quite unpredictably, especially during the early rounds of a cup competition. This makes the timing of bets - always important - harder than it ought to be.

Last Saturday morning, for example, Manchester United were 6-1 favourites to win England's FA Cup. In their 3rd round match they beat Middlesbrough 3-1 at home, then drew Liverpool, also at home, as 4th-round opponents - whereupon they were relegated to 7-1 3rd favourites. Most illogical.

After the 4th-round draw, Chelsea (who will be away to Oxford) were cut from 7-1

to 6-1 FA Cup favourites, while Arsenal (away to Wolves) remained at 8-1. Liverpool stayed at 10-1, as did Leeds, who replay non-league runners & Diamonds on January 13.

Before the 3rd round, plucky Rushden & Diamonds were 4,000-1 to win the FA Cup but are now 10,000-1 (do not be tempted) after holding Leeds to a scoreless draw at home. (Even at 50,000-1, R&D would not be a good proposition.)

The moral is: time your bets as carefully as possible.

So far, How To Punt It has invested £10 each-way on Leeds at 10-1 and £10 each-way on Arsenal at 8-1. In this context, each-way means £10 as a win bet, plus £10 at half those odds to reach the final. It has also bet £10 on Arsenal at 40-1 for the FA Cup-league double.

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Weekend Investor

Wall Street

This could be the year of the internet

Web stocks lead a rush that sends the Dow soaring, writes John Authers

It is getting monotonous. Money poured into Wall Street on Wednesday, pushing the Dow Jones Industrial Average past its former record high of 9,345, then through 9,400 and 9,500. It consolidated at this level for the rest of the week but passed 9,600 yesterday morning.

Suddenly, bullish forecasts that the Dow would reach 10,000 by the end of last year, withdrawn late last summer as the market melted down, seem as though they will be out by only a few weeks.

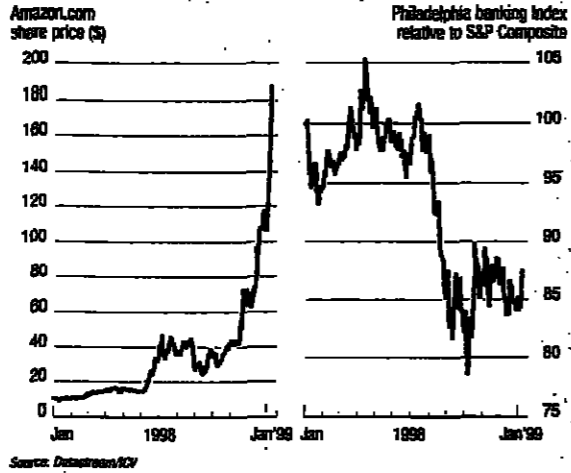
All the other symptoms of the bull market were back in evidence. A vintage triangular bidding battle is emerging for AirTouch, the largest US wireless operator, with both Bell Atlantic of the US and Vodafone of the UK known to be planning bids. The situation looks highly reminiscent of the saga of MCI, which attracted bids from British Telecommunications, GTE and WorldCom, the eventual winner, in a protracted struggle that lasted for most of 1997.

The economy remains in rude health, with December's employment figures much stronger than analysts had expected. The benign weather in much of north America last month will have boosted construction payrolls, but other sectors were strong and the overall unemployment rate fell to 4.3 per cent. Joy at these figures appears to have been undimmed by the fact that they can be expected to lead to higher interest rates.

Anecdotal evidence is that a money is pouring into mutual funds again in spite of a noticeable dip in private investors' enthusiasm following the Russian crisis last year. Dave Williams, who stood down on Wednesday as chief executive of Alliance Capital, one of the largest mutual fund managers, said that the rise in the market was "certainly reflected in mutual fund sales". He suggested the company would "happily annualise our sales for the first week of January and call it a year".

Investors' patience was not, as it turned out, greatly tested by the markets last year. According to Lipper, the New York-based research group that moni-

Engines of growth: e-commerce takes over from banking



tors mutual fund performance, the average US equity fund returned 14.5 per cent in 1998. This might have been far behind the 28.05 per cent recorded by funds that tracked the broad Standard & Poor's 500 index, but it was enough to keep investors happy.

More important, several of the biggest funds - where investors' money is concentrated - had banner years, mainly because they are now weighted heavily towards the large companies that lead the market. They were led by the \$76bn Fidelity Magellan fund, which gained 33.6 per cent for the year.

But the market phenomenon of the 1990s so far is the Internet. Web stocks, and particularly those linked specifically to "e-commerce", are going through the roof.

Readers may think they have heard this before. A review of last year, taking December 17 as a cut-off, pointed out that Amazon.com, the largest internet retailer, had gained 859 per cent for the year. It implied, delicately, that this might be a tad overdone.

Evidently, many in the market did not share this concern, as Amazon.com's share price has doubled again since then. A stock split this week seemed only to incite the market even more. Adjusting past share prices for the split, Amazon.com was worth \$10 at the start of the year. At noon yesterday, it was trading at \$187. This meant it was worth about \$29.5bn - not bad for a company that has never made a profit.

The American Stock Exchange Internet index has shown more muted growth, having doubled since October 2. While Amazon.com is the most eye-catching, several other internet stocks have enjoyed strong gains. They are led by E*Trade, one of the largest stockbrokers working only over the net, which also announced a stock split this week.

Were there any good reasons to buy stocks last week? The main one might come from the financial services sector, which led the bull market almost as emphatically as the technology stocks for several years.

As the chart shows, they tumbled far more than the rest of the market in late summer last year - an effective bet on a coming US recession. This week, there were strong signs that banks and other financial services groups were returning to favour. Two sizeable financial groups announced record results - MBNA, the largest specialist credit card issuer, and Morgan Stanley Dean Witter, one of the largest investment banks.

It would be easier to feel confident about the future for the market if banks, rather than the new titans of e-commerce, could resume their role as the motors for growth.

Dow Jones Ind Average table with columns for Day, Price, Change, % Change, 52 Week High, 52 Week Low.

London

Are bulls guilty of perjury?

Philip Coggan examines prosecution evidence

The trial has just begun. The two sides have prepared their partisan positions. But will the bulls of the UK stock market be convicted of abusing their power to drive up share prices, and committing perjury about the state of the British economy?

For those people who have been following the economic headlines, the pace of the new year rally in the stock market must have been rather startling. While many economists are muttering about recession in 1999, both the UK and the US stock markets, undistracted by the impeachment of President Clinton, have surged to all-time highs.

The FTSE 100 jumped 190.6 points on Wednesday, its third biggest points rise on record, to break back decisively over the 6,000 level. The last time it saw such exalted heights was back in the summer. Yesterday, an

early-afternoon run took the index to an all-time intra-day high of 6,195.6, beating the old peak of 6,183.7, set in July.

Of course, with profits ranging from static to falling and share prices rising, the bears on the prosecution side will argue that traditional valuation measures are, increasingly, getting stretched.

On Thursday night, the historic price/earnings ratio on the FTSE 100 was 24.7, while the gross dividend yield was 2.7 per cent (and, thanks to the abolition of the tax credit, the more realistic net figure is 2.3 per cent).

But the best defence for the bulls comes in the form of bond yields, with the 10-year gilt offering just 4.38 per cent at Thursday's close.

The favoured measure of the moment is the earnings yield (the inverse of the price/earnings ratio) relative to the bond yield. That

shows shares looking cheap compared with the 15-year average (see graph below).

Which set of ratios the jury will believe depends on its economic outlook in 1999. Some people think the UK economy will record only a mild setback before recovering quickly. This process is being helped by the Bank of England, which this week cut short-term rates for the fourth successive month.

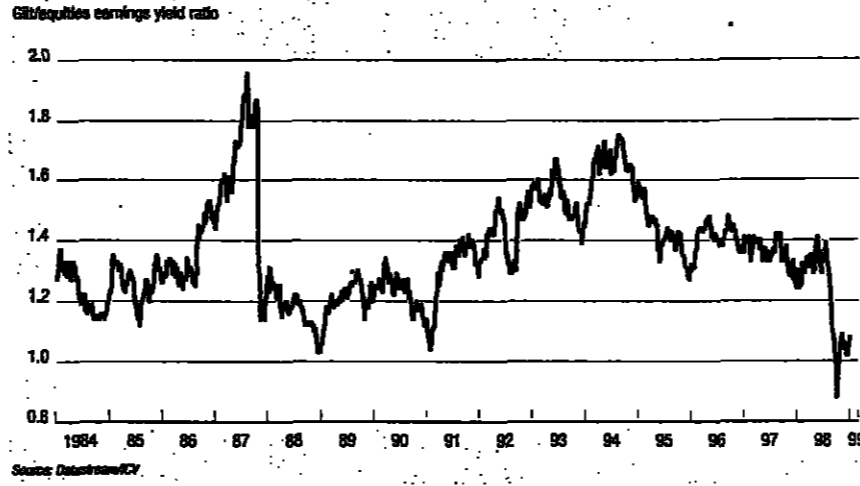
The stock market usually does very well when interest rates are falling. Most forecasts look for further cuts, taking the rate down to 5 per cent during the remainder of 1999.

Apart from their effect in reviving the economy, lower interest rates reduce corporate borrowing costs and the attraction of holding cash. There were signs this week that those investors who built up cash during the financial turmoil of July-October were putting their money back into the market,



Impartial judgment will be the key to market claims

The case for the defence



Highlights of the week

Table with columns: Index, Price, Change, % Change, 52 Week High, 52 Week Low, and brief commentary.

especially now that the uncertainties of the pre-euro period are over.

The lowest level of bond yields for 40 years also enhances the attractions of holding equities. But bears will argue that the level of bond yields is pointing to more sinister economic developments.

It could be that the world is drifting into an era that benefits from low inflation but suffers also from low growth. According to HSBC Economics: "The outlook for 1999 and 2000 will be a continuation of the weakest period of global economic expansion in 50 years."

Slow economic growth makes it very difficult for companies to push profits higher. Unless you are in a go-ahead industry, such as mobile telephones, sales growth is impossible. Customers resist price rises; indeed, in some cases, they insist on cuts. The best hope seems to be cost-cutting and, in companies that have already pared back to the bone, the only answer is to merge with a rival from the same industry and eliminate the duplicated services. That is one reason for the present round of merger mania.

In such circumstances, the greater security of bonds is more attractive. Arguably, fixed-income instruments should be re-rated relative to equities. Hence historical bond-equity valuation measures, loved by the bulls, may not be so relevant.

On the equity side of the equation, profits remain under pressure as yesterday's warning from RMC,

the building materials group, amply illustrated.

The stock market is increasingly splitting in two, with investors willing to pay almost any price for a sector that can deliver profit-growth and refusing to touch those that are being squeezed most by the economic pressures. The telecommunications and pharmaceuticals sectors both trade on P/E ratios of more than 50; the general industrial group can muster a P/E of less than 14 (and paper and packaging just 7.5).

Thus, stockpicking in 1999 is going to be highly important.

Value investors will be sniffing around the industrial group looking for bargains; growth investors will be hoping that the high ratings commanded by their favourite sectors are justified by earnings growth.

Good news for the former may come from the foreign exchange markets, where sterling has been drifting down steadily in the first few days of the year. The creation of the euro has ushered in a world of three leading currencies - the other two being the yen and the dollar - in which sterling will be a fairly minor player.

A prolonged decline in the pound will be a great relief to hard-pressed manufacturing exporters at a time when global competition is fierce.

To sum up ladies and gentlemen of the jury, the evidence is in your hands; your stockbrokers await the verdict.

philip.coggan@FT.com

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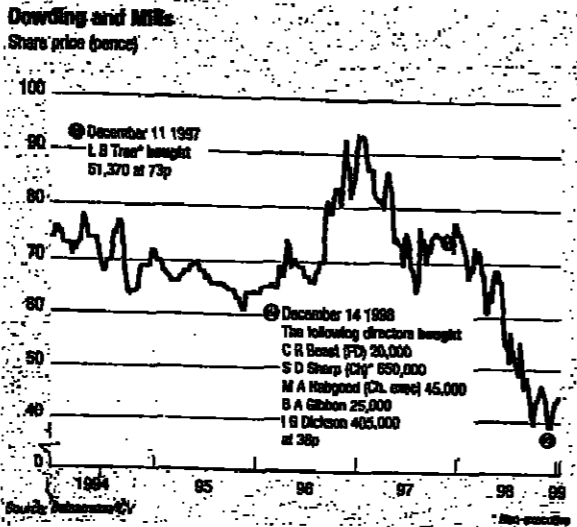
Table showing Sterling International Gross Account details, including deposit amounts and interest rates.

WOOLWICH logo and contact information for Woolwich Guernsey Limited.

Barry Riley Deflationary dilemma Less saving and more spending is the real need. Article text discussing economic challenges and market trends.

For an interactive guide to personal finance, visit http://www.FTQuicken.co.uk

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Directors' dealings
Five buy at low price

One of the largest buys of the week was at Dowling and Mills, in the electronic and electrical sector, writes Chris Hill. Five directors acquired shares worth \$405,000. The largest purchase was by Simon Sharp, non-executive chairman, who paid \$9 a share to increase his holding by 650,000. The purchase comes at a time when the stock has hit an all-time low.

Directors' share dealings
Transactions in own companies
21st-24th December 1998

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Shares, Value, No. of directors. Lists transactions for various companies like Yule Catto & Co, ASTEC, Nestor Healthcare, etc.

Directors' share dealings
Transactions in own companies
14-18 December 1998

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Shares, Value, No. of directors. Lists transactions for various companies like SALES, Yule Catto & Co, ASTEC, etc.

Last week's interim results

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Half year, Pre-tax profit, Earnings per share. Lists results for Abbey, Barbour, Enfield, etc.

Results due next week

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Date, Last year, Dividend. Lists companies like Bulloch, Demsons Electrical, etc.

Last week's preliminary results

Table with columns: Company, Sector, Year, Pre-tax profit, Earnings per share. Lists results for Allied Textile, Bunnings, etc.

Bids and deals

Vodafone offer

Vodafone, the UK mobile telephone business, joined the race to buy US rival AirTouch Communications with a \$3.8bn (\$580m) bid, writes Dan Bilefsky. Vodafone made its offer last weekend as AirTouch was negotiating a \$450m merger with Bell Atlantic.

Current takeover bids and mergers

Table with columns: Company, Value of bid, Market cap, Pre-bid price, Value of shares. Lists takeover bids for various companies like Amcor, BCH, etc.

Week ahead

Attention moves from below to trading updates and comments on the outlook as companies brief analysts ahead of the busy March reporting season, writes Martin Brice. Trading updates from retailers such as Boots and Dixons are likely to be examined for news of the all-important Christmas trading season.

In the Pink

Great party, pity about the nasty hangover

David Schwartz is wary about long-term share prospects, especially for those wishing to retire in 20 years

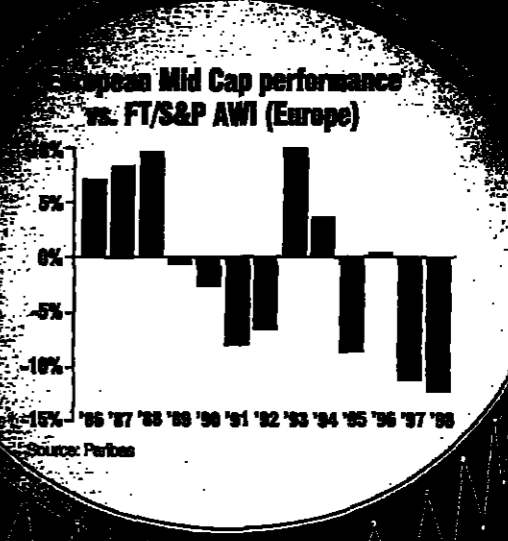
Forecasting the stock market's twists and turns for the next 12 months preoccupies many investors at this time of year. But few spare a moment to think about a far more important question: where will share prices stand two decades from today?

You need not be a rocket scientist to realise that higher savings will probably be needed to compensate for substandard investment prospects in the years ahead

Recent trends support this optimism. According to Dalastream/ICV, UK shares rose at an average annual rate of 12 per cent in the past 10 years. Unfortunately, a markedly different picture emerges if forecasts for the future are based upon historical records from the past century instead of the past decade.

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FT WEEKEND

True Fiction / James Morgan

How Kafka accounted for the IMF

The role of Franz Kafka as a dominant force in today's international financial system has been recognised only by inference but has never been properly investigated.

Many people find it hard enough to think about Kafka, and totally impossible to think about that forbidding figure and the International Monetary Fund simultaneously.

So when dozens of us received a news release from the IMF headed "Executive Board Praises Kafka's Distinguished Record of Service" all but the most resolute logged out, switched off and ran away.

My dear Keynes where he said that he and Harry Dexter White arrived at Bretton Woods in 1944 with copies of Kafka's 1944 Condition in their briefcases.

This book has unaccountably, or perhaps not so unaccountably, disappeared and inquiries about it are always met with studied ignorance.

It is a world Kafka knew well: the WAI also expected its governors to vote without meetings being called, or even without the governors being told a vote was taking place.

On condition that you meet the condition. "What is that condition?" "That is for you to decide."



Metropolis

A splendid cocoon - at £1,200 a night

Fears of recession are having no perceptible effect on the boom in London's private clubs, writes David Baker

From next week drinkers at Home House, London's newest private members' club, will be able to win or lose jaw-dropping sums of money in an instant, thanks to a direct link-up with IG Index, the City boys' favourite spread-betting outfit.

This month's opening will be the culmination of a project lasting more than two years and involving the restoration of a shell of a building to its 18th century splendour.

The In and Out, more properly known as the Naval and Military Club, has come to the end of the lease on its premises at 94 Piccadilly - famous for the burning

Astor household and temporary accommodation for General de Gaulle during the second world war.

For Sarah Moulder, marketing and membership manager, the move is a chance for the club to diversify. "We need to keep our eyes open for new members," she says.

In fact, the sector is booming. Almost all London clubs, from the Garrick to Soho House, have a waiting list of potential members.

Tony Mackintosh, chairman of The Groucho, adds: "We are not immune to recession, far from it, but there's a certain stability about a club that a restaurant, for example, doesn't have."

Most people think it is the British who are most obsessed by the weather. Judged by recent experience, including last weekend's in the Washington area, that honour now surely belongs on the other side of the Atlantic.

It is true that American weather can be more extreme. A big flood on the Mississippi, for example, is bound to be more serious than one on the Severn because there are no Malvern Hills and Welsh Mountains to hem it in.

On Saturday morning, I ventured out in the car from our country place in southern Maryland to buy the morning papers, still a bit twitchy because the radio warnings were louder than ever.

Back in front of the fire, I settled down for college football but every time the game got interesting the sound went off and the screen split to allow a local weatherman to intone about impending disaster, power cuts, downed trees and possibly locusts.

Between them, Home House and the In and Out are spending about £25m on their new properties. (The In and Out's move was helped by a £4.5m sweetener from its landlords.)

Business is so good that other clubs are expanding, too. The Groucho Club last year bought the restaurant, 192 Kensington Park Road, and is looking for a "small hotel" in London.

millennial than anything else. What with millennium computer bug problems, impeachment fever, Saddam Hussein and no professional basketball, the US is looking for disasters wherever it can find them.

Sky's the limit for disaster watchers

Arcadia / Jurek Martin

They said, and watch football. On Saturday morning, I ventured out in the car from our country place in southern Maryland to buy the morning papers, still a bit twitchy because the radio warnings were louder than ever.

Close to home, the local parish magazine, the Washington Post, warned a week ago last Friday that an ice storm of mega-magnitude was bearing down on the capital and its surrounds. Every TV and radio station chimed in

of Washington and discovered that the threat of inclement weather has caused the ceremonies to be moved inside to the Ronald Reagan Building.

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Advertisement for Swanso for the century, featuring a large image of a Swanso product and text including 'GLOBAL ARTS', 'Swanso for the century', and 'Andrew G...'

Handwritten Arabic text: ١٥٥٠

ART

GLOBAL ARTS '99

JANUARY 9 / JANUARY 10 1999



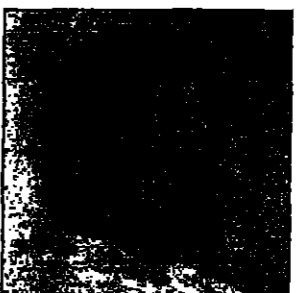
Art on the edge

'The current frantic fashion has created a febrile environment where people pretend it is some kind of a game'



Bugs and the Bard

'How long before Tom Hanks lends his digitally-scanned essence to the role of a bacterium?'



Weimar: City of Culture

'Nowhere in Germany is the question of how high culture yielded to barbarism more insistently present than here'

Page II Page VI Page VIII

Swansong for the century

The function of art today is to serve the masses, says Andrew Clark. Will the next millennium see society react by returning to a new form of elitism?

The arts have never been as unnecessary as they are now. Paradoxically, the arts have never been as available as they are now. That is the swansong of our century. It was the century in which, for the first time since man and woman gave aesthetic shape to life, art could be disseminated globally. Education, print, design, technology: these were to be the seeds of paradise, the tools of man's regeneration.

At least, that was the credo of arts visionaries at the last *fin-de-siècle*. It was a creed of altruism. Art was no longer to be the preserve of the aristocracy or the *haute bourgeoisie*. It was to inform every aspect of life. Its goal was nothing less than to open the eyes of the common man to the finer things in life - in short, to make life better.

Zoom forward 100 years. Art is everywhere. We have museums, concerts, design awards, travelling exhibitions. Leonardo's "Mona Lisa" is recognised the world over. Schoolchildren are familiar with Monet and Mozart. Tunes from the classics have been adopted by the advertising industry. National cultures cross-fertilise on a scale that could never have been dreamed of a century ago.

And yet the arts have been marginalised. On the one hand, they are so commonplace that they have become routine and repetitive. On the other, they appear inaccessible next to the million other things that bombard our late 20th century consciousness. Technical reproduction, that genie of the late 19th century, turned out to be a sorcerer's apprentice. It did not simply facilitate the dissemination of the arts; it made possible the creation of popular culture - a phenomenon that had never previously entered the equation because the media did not exist to develop it.

That is why, instead of disseminating aesthetic values, technical reproduction has ended up perverting them. It created a medium for popularising things that have little substance. The power of pop culture lies not just in its superficial appeal, but also in its weight of numbers. It is thanks to that power that the numbers game - ratings, charts, the rule of the market, call it what you will - has become the touchstone of value.

Value today is defined by demand, which is dictated by mass taste - which in turn is determined by the lowest common denominator. Instead of being a collective of individual expression, culture has been reduced to what "catches on" - in other words, what sells most. In an age when everything has to be instant, the ephemeral supplants the transcendental. By definition, the arts have a deeper aesthetic and philosophical foundation. They simply cannot compete.

Commercial values are not something new to art. Many composers of the past made a living by trying to please. Most are now forgotten. Even Mozart had to please. But pleasing others was not his primary goal - nor was it Beethoven's, any more than it is Elliott Carter's or Harrison Birtwistle's priority today. Great artists want to communicate - otherwise they would not create - and have always been gladdened when their creations went down well with large numbers of people. But their fundamental aim was to express what they wanted to express: a vision, a dream, a utopia, a countermodel to life, whatever. Happy as they were to entertain, they did not want to do so at any cost. Popular culture must entertain at all costs.

Artists pay heavily for their ideals. Mozart enjoyed far less success in his lifetime than his contemporaries Salieri or Anfossi, who pandered to the market. Beethoven's Fifth Symphony was a failure at its first performance. So was *Correan*. *Le Sacre du printemps* was booed off the stage. But Beethoven, Bizet and Stravinsky survived because they had patrons intelligent enough to realise that they could not dictate what an artist should create.

Today, if art does not

who understand the numbers game and have worked out how to make money from it. How else could a 12-year-old Welsh tenor, or a blind Italian tenor, or a scantly clad Oriental violinist make it to the top of the classical record charts? None of these so-called "artists" is technically or musically exceptional. Their value lies in a gimmick factor, which their record companies knew would sell. Why has the soundtrack for *Titanic* proved so popular? Not because it is an original piece of orchestral music, but because it is an amalgam of feelgood sounds. None of these has anything to do with art. They are all manifestations of commercial culture, and as such are no different from the cuddly Furby, this Christmas's must-have toy.

There is nothing wrong with making money out of the arts. Indeed, art cannot survive without an element of commerce. But art loses its essence if its ratings potential becomes more important than its value as an expression of individual creativity. Hollywood would not dare say anything that contradicted popular taste. Nor would Andrew Lloyd Webber. Nor would the backers of the *Three Tenors* or the *Spice Girls*. Like the promoters of Charlotte Church,



post-war era, allied to the legacy of the Nazi years, has left the country ill-equipped to withstand the blast of pop culture. Germans are still proud of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms. But, as in the UK and the US, non-pop musical performance is dominated by works that are on average 130 years old. And even that takes up a decreasing slice of the national consciousness.

We are back to the question of "access". Technical reproduction - that is, the media of print, screen, audio and CD - has unleashed a bombardment of sensations and images, for which the human consciousness has only limited space. The less thought-inducing the attack, the more likely it is to succeed.

What can we take forward to the new millennium? It would be a mistake to assume that a century of commercialisation will give way to a century of computerisation. Computers may ease the technical process of creativity but they will not alter its basic forms any more than electronics did. The human mind can be relied on to use a computer no less creatively than it did a harmonic system or a movie screen.

What we will see, thanks to computer-generated media, is a change in the way the arts are sold and consumed. We can look forward to a breaking down of barriers between creator and consumer. The middle man - in the shape of the record company, the publisher, the PR representative - will wither away. Some rock artists are already blurring the trail by dispensing with their record companies and selling direct on the Internet. There is no reason that authors, composers and classical performers should not do the same.

Perhaps society will react to the culture of dumbing down by returning to a new form of elitism - the elitism of those who prize individual excellence and individual expression above mass-produced ephemera. And after this century's fragmentation of old forms and structures, we may start to search for a new alignment of mind and matter, for an aesthetic world in which structure and emotions regain their balance, for a sense of values in which the tyrannies of the media, of beat, of literal fidelity and harmonic breakdown are laid aside. Only then will the arts be necessary again.

In an age when everything has to be instant, the ephemeral supplants the transcendental. The arts cannot compete

please instantly. It will not sell. If it does not sell, the artist will not survive. There is every pressure not to experiment, not to dream for the future, not to suggest a countermodel to life, not to create utopias of love, harmony, freedom. That pressure comes from the market - a dictatorship to which politicians increasingly, surreptitiously, pay court.

The function of art should be to stand outside society, to challenge it, to make people think. But such a philosophy threatens anyone whose power is based on populism rather than educated choice. That is why the function of art today is to serve the masses, to pander to the taste of the majority. If that was not the case, why would we invent such mantras as "access" and "accountability"?

The old elitism, which restricted art to a narrow band of the privileged, has been replaced by a new elitism - the elitism of understanding. Today, "elitist" no longer means the application of the highest standards; it means something that is not comprehensible to everyone within a few minutes. The problem with this is that it subverts the meaning of art. When art ceases to be a challenge, it ceases to be art. It has no future.

Culture today is controlled not by people who know and care about art, but by those

Andreas Bocelli and Vanessa Mae, they are geared to producing shows that have mass appeal. That is why their products rank as, at best, showbiz, at worst sentimental kitsch. It is certainly not art.

The sense of Platonic idealism which inspired the great arts of classical culture, and which fuelled its dissemination in the early part of the century, has given way to aesthetic nihilism. I am not just talking about computer games, tech-no-beat, dung-and-entrails art, or the exclusion of Shakespeare from the Millennium Dome. I am referring to the way arts subsidies are discussed. On the one hand you have the arts-versus-hospital-beds argument, which presupposes only one choice. On the other you have taxpayers, who say that, if they are paying good money for art, it ought to conform to their expectations. "If it's not what I expect or understand, I don't see why I should pay for it" has become the prevailing argument.

Not, perhaps, in Germany - at least, not yet. The arts in Germany are still subsidised more generously than elsewhere, because it is acknowledged that artists cannot and should not give in to mass taste. But Germany is the exception. Even there, the head-in-the-sand attitude of artists in the

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GLOBAL ARTS '99

As the century nears its end, a feeling of suspended animation seems to hang over the contemporary art scene.

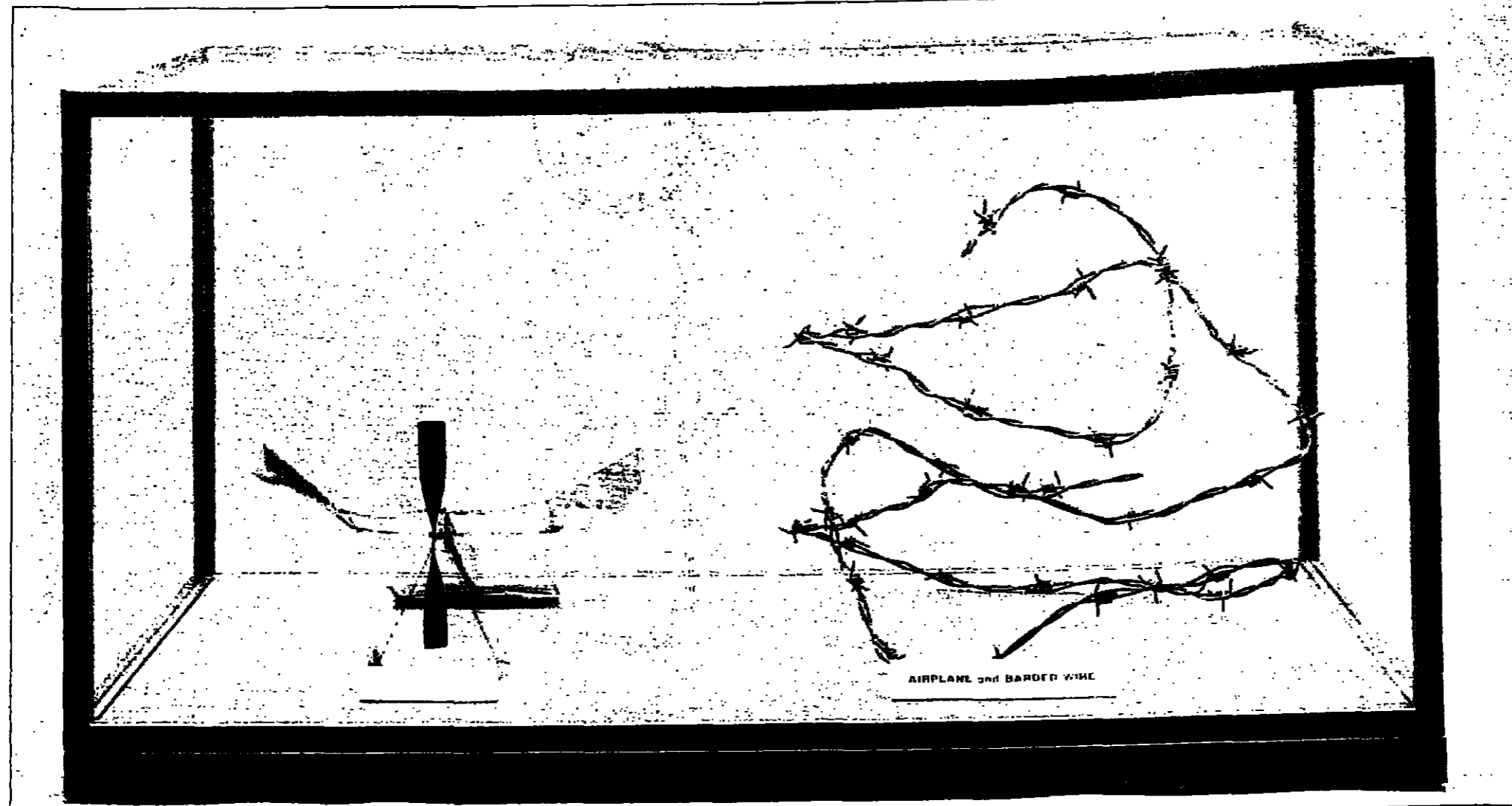
As Rachel Whiteread grapples with the high seriousness of her Holocaust Memorial now under construction in Vienna, and Gary Hume prepares to represent Britain at the Venice Biennale this June, the next generation seems content to play with all the brightest colours in their paintboxes and their favourite furry toys.

This is the thinking behind the self-consciously pretty, pretend lighthearted painting and sculpture which dominated London shows as the year drew to a close.

It is hard to believe that such slight stuff can stand this intensity of scrutiny. While there is no doubt that it is a strong trend that needs to be worked through, the second Saatchi show seems like a hostage to fortune.

This desperate frivolity seems to be a peculiarly English condition. No matter how successful the YBAs became, there was always an underlying feeling of "I can't believe I'm doing this" or, as Damien Hirst put it with his usual perceptiveness: "I'm always waiting for someone to stop me. So far nobody has..."

When the Pollock show arrives at the Tate in March, it will find already there a new installation,



A scale and obsessiveness beyond irony: Airplane and Barbed Wire from Chris Burden's 'When Robots Rule', a new installation at London's Tate Gallery from March

Gene Ogden

Contemporary art

Cutting edge loses its sharpness

The next wave of young British artists lacks the current generation's daring flair, says Lynn MacRitchie

"When Robots Rule", specially made for the Duveen Galleries by the Los Angeles-based artist Chris Burden. Burden is just as involved in contemporary culture as his British counterparts, using models and toys to make great sprawling table-top metropolises such as "Pizza City", but the scale and obsessiveness of his enterprise takes it way beyond irony to make a serious commentary on our times.

Each other's pockets and pretend that it is all some kind of a game. There is a lot of cod-democracy, too; a notion that anyone can do it. Last summer, the Chiswick Gallery held three shows selected from open submission which attracted thousands of entries, and it plans to do so again in July.

Also south of the river, the South London Gallery on the way to Peckham has already established itself with high profile shows by both YBAs and grandees such as Anselm Kiefer, glad of the chance its high white Victorian spaces give to show enormous paintings. It kicks off the year with Julian Schnabel, wild boy of 1980s New York, not seen in London for more than a decade.

The continuing spread of art venues throughout London, often in fairly inaccessible locations, can make getting around everything a nightmare. One solution is to book a tour with CAST, Contemporary Art Society Tours. Once a month, they whisk punt-

ers painlessly through the labyrinths of Hackney, Hoxton, Shoreditch and beyond: their last tour of 1998 included venues opened only days before, so it's a good way to keep up with a scene which can seem bewildering to the more casual visitor.

One of the most important strands in current art is a sort of careless internationalism. Successful artists travel a lot and curators flit from continent to continent selecting the large scale biennales that have become such a feature of the scene. This year's biennale destinations, apart from Venice in June, are Istanbul in September, Kwanju in August, and Havana, date to be announced. A newcomer is Liver-

As Damien Hirst perceptively put it: 'I'm always waiting for someone to stop me. So far nobody has...'

pool, whose first biennale will be held in September. Directed by Tony Bond from the Art Gallery of New South Wales, a thoughtful and serious curator, this should be one to catch. The epitome of the modern curator is surely Hans Ulrich Obrist. Officially based in Paris at the Musée d'Art Moderne, he is always everywhere, looking, talking, writing. Co-curator of "Cities on the Move", the study of contemporary urban development in Asia which comes to the Hayward Gallery in May, he has also, with colleagues Maria Lind and Rebecca Gordon Nesbitt, established Salon 3, a peripatetic exhibition and discussion space temporarily roosting in an empty shop in the Elephant and Castle. Its opening evening summed up the cutting edge art event of the late 1990s. An eminent scientist lectured about artificial intelligence. There were art works dotted about in a casual sort of way

ART on paper FAIR Royal College of Art Kensington Gore, London SW7 18-21 February 1999 11am-8pm, 7pm last 2 days

'The Future Famous' New paintings and sculptures by Award-winning Artists Unicorn at Space 8

WEST LONDON Antiques & Fine Art Fair KENSINGTON TOWN HALL

A celebration of Africa in the Tyrol 28 June - 4 July 1999 A chance to sample a little bit of Africa...

US exhibitions Beware of the crowds Impressionist mania also has its downside, says Paul Jeromack



Mucha's The Four Seasons: Spring, 1896 Bridgeman Art Library

Ring out the Monet, Renoir, Manet and Van Gogh have their outputs re-analysed, re-categorised and re-packaged each time with a different slant. The drawback is that visiting these shows usually offers about as much aesthetic uplift as a Tokyo subway car during rush hour. Hoping to alleviate the situa-

tion somewhat (and taking their cue from many local gyms), the Los Angeles County Museum of Art will keep "Van Gogh's Van Goghs: Masterpieces from the Van Gogh Museum, Amsterdam" (January 17-April 4) open 24 hours a day - though reservations must be made early.

Expect similar crowding at "The Collection of Dr Gachet" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (May 25-August 19), which features more than 50 paintings and drawings collected by this homeopathic physician who was friend to Pissarro, Cézanne, and Van Gogh.

In contrast with her male impressionist brethren, the American Mary Cassatt has still not received her critical due, a fact perhaps less due to her sex than to her nationality. After closing at the Art Institute of Chicago on January 3, "Mary Cassatt, Modern Woman" travels to the Museum of Fine Art, Boston (February 14 - May 9) and to the National Gallery of Art, Washington (June 6-Sept 6) - the latter venue is well represented in the non-lendable Chester Dale bequest there.

ART 99 The London Contemporary Art Fair 20-21 January 1999 See and buy work from the best known contemporary British galleries and their artists

Advertisement for 'Cornucopia for the eye' featuring a portrait of a woman and the text 'Annus dif'.

Handwritten text in Arabic script: صكنا من الامم

Galleries

Cornucopia for the eyes

William Packer says the galleries of Europe and Britain promise to make 1999 a year to remember

Look forward at this time of year towards what is coming to the galleries over the next 12 months...

ate future has some real treats in prospect, what with the "fifteen in the 20th century" that was in Boston...

In June, the self-portraits of Rembrandt will be a key event at London's National Gallery

at the British Museum; and King Charles I, at the 350th anniversary of his execution...

Gogh and Cézanne, in his role as a collector and patron of the impressionists...

In February, Hockney reappears in Paris at the Musée Picasso...

lines the influence of Picasso on his work, especially his printmaking...

come to light. But the Tate's principal contribution to our spring comes in March...

The National Gallery's small study of Rogier van der Weyden also looks especially inviting...

April in Paris sees a major show at the Grand Palais of Egyptian Art in the time of the Pyramids...

There is also to be a Victor Pasmore retrospective at the Tate at Liverpool...

But the more important shows this month will be abroad - the "Nymphs" of Monet at the Orangerie in Paris...

van Dyck in celebration of the quatercentenary of his birth. It comes to the Royal Academy in September...

Along with the Venice Biennale, as I hope, June brings several notable shows - in London, at the National Gallery...

There is to be a Bonnard exhibition at the admirable Gianadda Foundation at Martigny in Switzerland...

Then come summer and autumn. The Tate's "Abracadabra" in July seems likely to be an intriguing, perhaps contentious testing of the "New Spirit" in the international art of the 1990s...

September brings the Van Dyck to London, and with it a related exhibition at the British Museum, "The Light of Nature", of the landscape drawings of Van Dyck...

In London in October we shall have Joseph Beuys at the Barbican and Lucio Fontana at the Hayward...



Showing soon at London's Barbican: Picasso and Photography Roy Moore

Salerooms

Annus difficultus

Antony Thorncroft surveys the impact of economic conditions

The most important events in the art world often happen outside the saleroom. Undoubtedly most excitement is generated at auction...



By appointment: a Warhol image for February's Art on Paper Fair

In the same way it was a decision by Brussels to double to 5 per cent, the VAT to be paid on works of art imported from non-EU nations...

The mega-rich, the score or so enthusiastic collectors who can afford to pay \$5m or more for a work of art without missing a heart beat...

In theory most British antique dealers had a good time last year - or at least in the early months. Members of the British Antique Dealers Association (BADA)...

ers are less optimistic about 1999. Picture dealers, who have only recently enjoyed stronger demand, saw trading conditions slacken...

Already the leading auction houses, in particular Sotheby's and Christie's, with offices around the world, are directing goods to New York...

were quite encouraging for London. The biggest surprise was the demand for works by Young British Artists. The main collector in this field, Charles Saatchi...

Sotheby's great year-end achievement was succession. In 1999 the trends in the art market over recent years will continue and intensify...

They are aiming for one of the most important events in the art world often happen outside the saleroom. Undoubtedly most excitement is generated at auction...

stop shopping, with many more goods on the premises for inspection and a much more comfortable ambience. Both auction houses now own dealers, and are close to the stage when they can offer any rich potential buyer...

Both salerooms are already active in the upper echelons of the property market, and they also see some of their future in art publishing and education...

For the other inevitable trend of 1999 will be a growing shortage of fine quality works of art. For the top salerooms, the challenge of increasing turnover in the US each year is largely dependent on the death of rich widows...

But the dealers are fighting back. They may still cluster together at fairs, and trade increasingly among themselves, but they have the knowledge and the contacts, and can spot auction house mis-cataloguing and bargains at fairs...

Then there is ART 99 at the Business Design Centre in Islington, which has become a major event in the contemporary and modern art world...

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A large advertisement for Teatro Real featuring logos of sponsors like ELOMUNDO, LICO, winterthur, MUSINI, ERICSSON, AIRTEL, PHILIPS, Audi, DOW, GlaxoWellcome, SIEMENS, SUAREZ, and others. The central text reads 'THEATRO REAL FUNDACION DEL TEATRO LIRICO'.

A vertical advertisement for 'ART 99' featuring the text 'ART 99' in large letters and 'The Business Design Centre' below it. It also includes contact information for the event.

GLOBAL ARTS '99

The London stage

Return of repertory will test the stars

Rarely shown Russian classics and some brand new plays will spice the West End programmes, writes Alastair Macaulay

Repertory is back. The good old system, whereby actors are hired to take parts in more productions than one at a time, will make another return to the heart of British theatrical life in 1999...



From Stratford to the Barbican: a scene from Richard Nelson's Goodnight Children Everywhere, featuring Robin Weaver as VI and Simon Scardfield as Peter

excitement and glamour into London theatre in recent years, has several new productions under preparation. Perhaps the most prestigious of these is Jonathan Kent's staging of David Hare's play Plenty...

Maxim Gorky's exciting but seldom seen Vassa will continue the Almeida season at the Albery Theatre (opening on January 20). Howard Davies directs a cast led by Sheila Hancock...

Of the several new plays so far definitely scheduled, perhaps the most noteworthy will be Hanif Kureishi's Sleep with Me. Kureishi is not best known as a theatre artist...

This may be an interesting year for Russian plays by authors other than the inevitable Chekhov. On January 28, the National Theatre presents Ostrovsky's The Forest...

The Almeida Vassa at the Albery is one of two announced Gorky productions; the other is Summerfolk...

London theatre usually contains a high quota of productions of seldom seen plays that help to flesh out our understanding of world theatre and its history...

The Almeida Theatre, which has done so much to inject new

January 21. And producer Thelma Holt dares to mount a new Macbeth in the West End this March. Rufus Sewell, an actor with virtually no Shakespearean experience...

Another important 1999 Shakespeare production will be seen out of London: Jude Kelly's staging of The Tempest (opening in February)...

Meanwhile, the RSC brings its recent Bishops III (opening in Robert Lindsey) to the West End, opening at the Savoy Theatre on

in January, featuring many of the same actors as have been appearing in Noble's The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe. Only a few new other productions for the West End are definitely scheduled at this time...

It remains to be seen whether the National Theatre will maintain its stature as the UK's foremost home for successful new drama

staging of the new Michael Frayn play Copenhagen (Duchess Theatre, February).

Although the RSC will continue to use the Barbican Centre for only part of the year, it will be colonising several other London theatres (witness Richard III at the Savoy). A new collabora-

tion with Neil Barlett and the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, will involve launching Barlett's new version of the Marivaux classic The Dispute at the Other Place in Stratford-upon-Avon in

February and March. RSC productions arriving from Stratford at the two Barbican theatres in 1999 include Adrian Noble's production of The Tempest and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe...

March and bringing it into the Hammersmith Lyric later in the spring.

The RSC also renews its collaboration with the Young Vic, where its 1998 Stratford production of Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair and Steven Poliakoff's new play Talk of the City will run

This year marks the 1200th anniversary of an event that changed the spiritual and political landscape of Europe. In 799 Charlemagne, having pacified nearly all the territories held by the Saxons...

Decorative arts The emperor and the maharaja

Susan Moore previews a spate of exhibitions that bring to life some great figures of the past

holding; his record at the Met and The Cloisters - one of the world's great collections of medieval art - is remarkable.

On show are objects from antiquity to the 16th century, embracing the likes of Bronze Age jewellery, Byzantine silver and enamels, filigree and cloisonné Anglo-Saxon brooches and Spanish romanesque manuscript illumination...

Highlights among a feast of ivories, manuscript illumination and goldsmiths' work include Charlemagne's sarcophagus from the Aachen cathedral treasury, the Grimfridus chalice from Dumbarton Oaks...

As a selection of acquisitions made over the last two decades, the show could not be more fitting. For Wixom, all too rarely among museum curators, has a passion and an unerring eye for a great work of art...

New York instead (March 16-June 30). It travels on to Kobe and Kyoto.

Also making its way across the US is "Land of the Winged Horsemen: Art in Poland, 1573-1764", some 150 works of the fine and decorative arts drawn from more than 25 public collections in Poland...

The baroque aesthetic also made its way across the Atlantic: as witnessed in "The Arts of Early Pennsylvania 1680-1788". This show charts the evolution of colonial furniture, ceramics, textiles, silver and metalwork and painting...

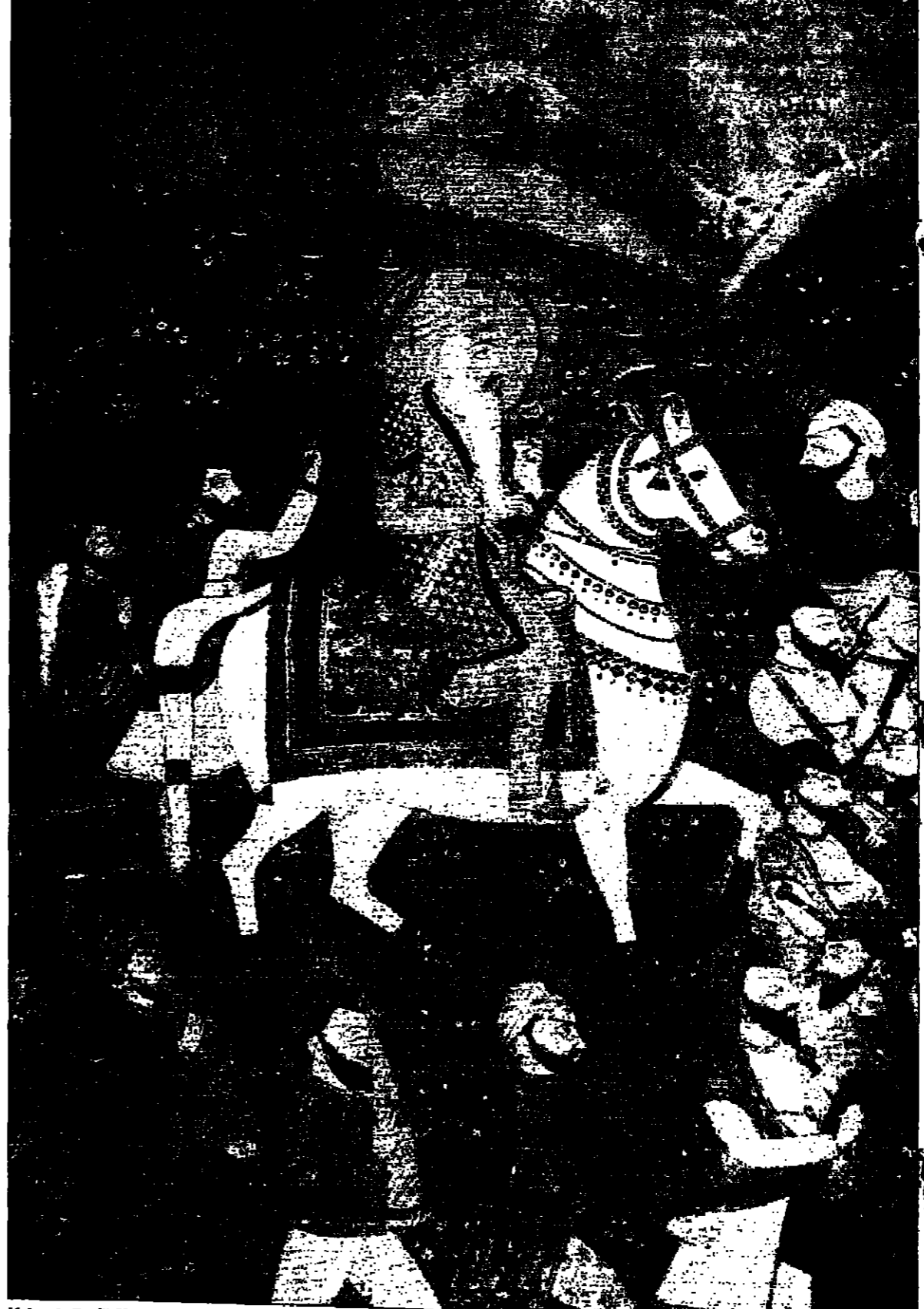
More of the Ottoman court, at the Château de Versailles this time. "The Treasures of the Sultan: Topkapi at Versailles" explores the relatively little-known period of the 17th and 18th centuries when the French and Ottoman courts were most curious about one another...

As well as a cluster of medieval shows, the year also offers various takes on the baroque. To note three: "Ambiente Barocco: Life and the Arts in the Baroque Palaces of Rome" brings together a lush profusion of elaborately carved furniture, sculpture, clocks and candelabra, costume and textiles...

A little-regarded art form and an even less familiar culture are under examination in an exhibition of Burmese lacquer at the British Museum (September 24-December 12). Its base is the gift of some 270 examples - of vessels, furniture, sculpture, manuscripts, even musical instruments and architecture - amassed by Ruth and Ralph Isaacs...

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Maharaja Ranjit Singh with Retainers, Lahore: from the V & A Museum's forthcoming Arts of the Sikh Kingdoms

Whingers a... advertisement with a large image of a person's face and some text.

Handwritten Arabic text: صلا من الصلاة

US theatre

There is nothing like a Dame

New Yorkers keenly await Judi Dench's Broadway debut in one of several plays transferring from London, writes Brendan Lemon

When Audra McDonald, the American theatre's newest diva, released her debut solo album this past fall, many observers were initially disappointed that her record's selections consisted not of the usual Kern-Porter-Gershwin standards but of songs by a new generation of musical-theatre composers.

The Wild Party, based on an effervescent flapper-era poem by Joseph Moncure March, will begin performances at the Public Theatre in the spring, and Marie Christine, a 19th-century setting of the Medea story that LaChiusa has written expressly for McDonald, will open at Lincoln Centre Theatre in the autumn.

The other McDonald darling, Adam Guettel, astonished theatregoers a few seasons ago with his coal-miner

musical Floyd Collins, but the piece closed before drawing the audience it deserved. In the coming months, though, new productions of the work at prominent regional theatres (such as the Goodman, in Chicago, beginning April 23) are certain to widen the show's considerable cult reputation. Another New York run seems likely.

Other musical offerings promise less adventure and more razzle-dazzle. Fosse: A Celebration of Song and Dance is set to open at Broadway's Broadhurst on January 14. This revue devoted to the director/choreographer Bob Fosse follows the huge success of Cabaret and Chicago musicals staged by the late showman, and is being overseen by Fosse's widow, Gwen Verdon, and his protégé, Ann Reinking.

Meanwhile, The Civil War, based on letters and diaries from the American 1860s, is the latest from composer

Frank Wildhorn. Wildhorn is not known for his subtlety or sophistication, but no one who has observed the rabid fans outside the stage door of his two current Broadway shows, Jekyll and Hyde and the cleverly revamped Scarlet Pimpernel, should dismiss the prospects of the Abe Lincoln-era saga, which opens at Broadway's St James Theatre on April 22.

Broadway will not be quite as awash with musical revivals in the new year as it has been in recent seasons. Fans of Bernadette Peters, if not of innovative casting, will be happy to see her step into the hats and holsters of the Wild West tale Annie Get Your Gun which opens on March 4 at the Marquis; and lovers of the comic strip Piznuz will be buoyed to learn that a restaging of You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown, the 1967 musical based on the cartoon series, will bow at the Longacre on February 11.

headed for New York, two themes may be discerned: English kings named Henry and the US dramatist Eugene O'Neill. In the Roundabout Theatre's late-winter staging of The Lion in Winter, Laurence Fishburne plays Henry II and Stockard Channing Eleanor of Aquitaine; and in A Man for All Seasons, due for a pre-Broadway national tour next autumn, Derek Jacobi will star as Sir Thomas More, lord chancellor to Henry VIII.

Late in the year, O'Neill's A Moon for the Misbegotten will mark the return of the radiant Cherry Jones to both Broadway and to classical roles. And in April, O'Neill's The Iceman Cometh, which originated at London's Almeida Theatre, looks likely to make Kevin Spacey's return to the New York stage equally triumphant. Observers were all but ready to award Spacey a Tony statuette, until Chicago's Goodman Theatre announced that

in January its acclaimed production of Death of a Salesman, with Brian Dennehy, would move, ironically, into Broadway's Eugene O'Neill. Also clouding Spacey's excellent prospects is the fact that New York audiences can be wary of English productions of American classics. They tend to be more receptive to new plays from London. Before the Tony deadline, May 1, Broadway will in that regard welcome Closer, Patrick Marber's contemporary look at a young woman (to be played by Natasha Richardson) and her relationship with two men; The West, Conor McPheerson's examination of a band of becheolers trading ghost stories in an Irish pub; and The Unrepentant Men, which focuses on a country cottage roundelay, opens at Playwrights on March 14.

Another Playwrights veteran, A.R. Gurney, has shifted his allegiance to Lincoln Centre Theatre. Gurney's dissections of upper-middle-class behaviour have lately lacked their characteristic drinks-party fizz but it may bode well that his new play, Far East, has a historical setting (Japan during the Korean War) and a young, dynamic cast, headed by Michael Hayden. Opening night is January 10.

No matter how vibrant a 1999 the American theatre has, a significant segment of theatregoers do not feel Broadway is really Broadway unless there is a new Stephen Sondheim musical about. While his new piece, Wise Guys, set in the 1930s and concerning two American brothers, will probably not have its New York premiere very soon, it looks almost certain that a production of it, perhaps in San Diego, will open before the end of the year.



Heading west: Judi Dench as a stubbornly old-style actress in David Hare's Amy's View Alastair Muir



Taking a bow: first performance at Manchester's newly reopened Royal Exchange Theatre Jon Super

The arts in the UK

Whingers are silenced

The combined revolution of lottery funding and imaginative management is having a surprising effect, says Antony Thorncroft

Centuries ago artists were mainly in the business of spreading light and joy; now they prefer gloom and doom. This is certainly true of the cultural industry, which has developed on the back of working artists in recent decades.

The fact is that there has never been more opera, music, dance, drama and art produced in the UK. One inevitable consequence of this cultural outpouring is that Government subsidy failed to rise in line with the output: the overall grant was frozen for much of the 1980s and some of the plethora of arts companies struggled to survive.

Then came the lottery, pumping over £300m a year into the arts in England alone, with as much again revitalising museums and the heritage. Add in a new Government which wanted to broaden the appeal of the arts, and was prepared to pay to achieve such a transformation, and the stage should have been set for an end to the ingrained pessimism of the arts community.

No chance. In December, there was general silence when culture secretary Chris Smith announced how he was going to spend the extra £300m in subsidy he had obtained for the cultural institutions over the next three years.

Days later the chairman of the Arts Council, Gerry Robinson, gave away £218.5m for 1999-2000, 15 per cent more than in the current year, with above inflation increases promised for the next two years.

Was the arts community happy? Not on your life. It continued to complain that the lottery money invested into new theatres, opera houses, art galleries, etc. would not help to fill them with artistic events, or audiences, even though changes to the lottery act mean that

lottery money can now be used for revenue funding. The Jeremiahs say that the extra subsidy is too little, and comes too late, and anyway is not evenly spread.

But the days of the whinger may be numbered. In Gerry Robinson the arts has an unusual benefactor. He is an outsider who takes a business approach to the job and is reluctant to throw good money after bad. He is backing winners, in terms of companies and art forms, and already seems prepared

The year could be judged by what happens at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden

to risk the anger of numerous drama companies by freezing their grants.

So far his revolutionary approach - more than halving the size of the Arts Council and its work force, and devolving most funding decisions to the regional arts boards - has been met with stunned acquiescence from the arts world. This will be the year in which his policies will prove life saving or impractical. It could also be the year when certain established art forms may find themselves suddenly less fashionable with the Arts Council than more populist, community based, ethnic minority interests.

In short, the arts in the UK could be on the brink of an exciting adventure, even a golden age.

For all the scare stories, no lottery funded arts building that has opened has been forced to close through lack of revenue funding. Undoubtedly the extra costs of running new buildings were under-appreciated and there have been tricky times for the new and refurbished theatres at Cambridge, Scarborough, the Green Room in Manchester, and the Quay arts centre on the Isle of

Wight, but they are all still in business.

The biggest venture to date, the new Sadler's Wells in London, has got off to a good start, and the rebuilt Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester has been warmly welcomed, as have important new cultural venues in Stoke, Malvern and Hereford. Another theatre which caused some anxiety, the Royal Court in London, has been rescued, thanks to £2m from the Jerwood Foundation and should open this

autumn. To date, lottery funding has worked wonders, with a surprisingly small downside.

There is no reason to think that 1999 will produce a spate of genuine "arts in crisis" and "lottery white elephant" stories. The Arts Council is holding lottery money in reserve to help build out worthy companies (such as the RSC) who have got themselves into difficulties, and although business sponsorship of the arts may not be quite as glamorous as in the past it still pumps £100m a year into the arts in the UK.

There are also schemes in place to use lottery money to entice in new audiences, especially the young, with special ticket offers. If arts companies fall into debt in the future will it be because they are badly managed or because they are creating work which has no popular, or artistic, relevance?

A flourishing arts scene needs more than money. The main challenge this year, as ever, will be raising the management competence of arts companies. The problem of whether an arts organisation should be led by a great creative force or by a skilled

manager, or both, has never been satisfactorily solved. The UK's leading arts centre, on the South Bank, is currently wrestling with the problem as it seeks a new chief executive.

The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, has gone for the dual approach. Its administrative supreme, the American Michael Kaiser, has made an impressive start since arriving in November, keeping the music director Bernard Haitink on board and restoring to the schedule a few performances of Paul Bunyan from the cancelled Royal Opera programme, but the hunt is still on for his artistic partner.

In fact, the whole arts year could be judged by developments at the Royal Opera House. The rebuilding of this, the largest arts lottery project, costed at £214m, with £76m coming from the lottery, is on schedule, and the new Covent Garden should open in early December. If all goes well, and the inaugural production of Falstaff is a success, and the new artistic director is admired, then the arts generally will be regarded as a cause for national celebration rather than the object of derision and criticism that it is today, at least in the media.

Throw in the promise of free entry for all museums; the near completion of the architecturally adventurous Lowry Centre in Salford and the new Tate Gallery of Modern Art on Bankside; some progress towards removing the eyesores on the South Bank Centre; a continuation of adventurous programming at the Barbican; and the steady development of new cultural palaces in Bristol and at Gateshead, and you have an exciting year in prospect. Once again the arts might be spreading some light and joy around the land.

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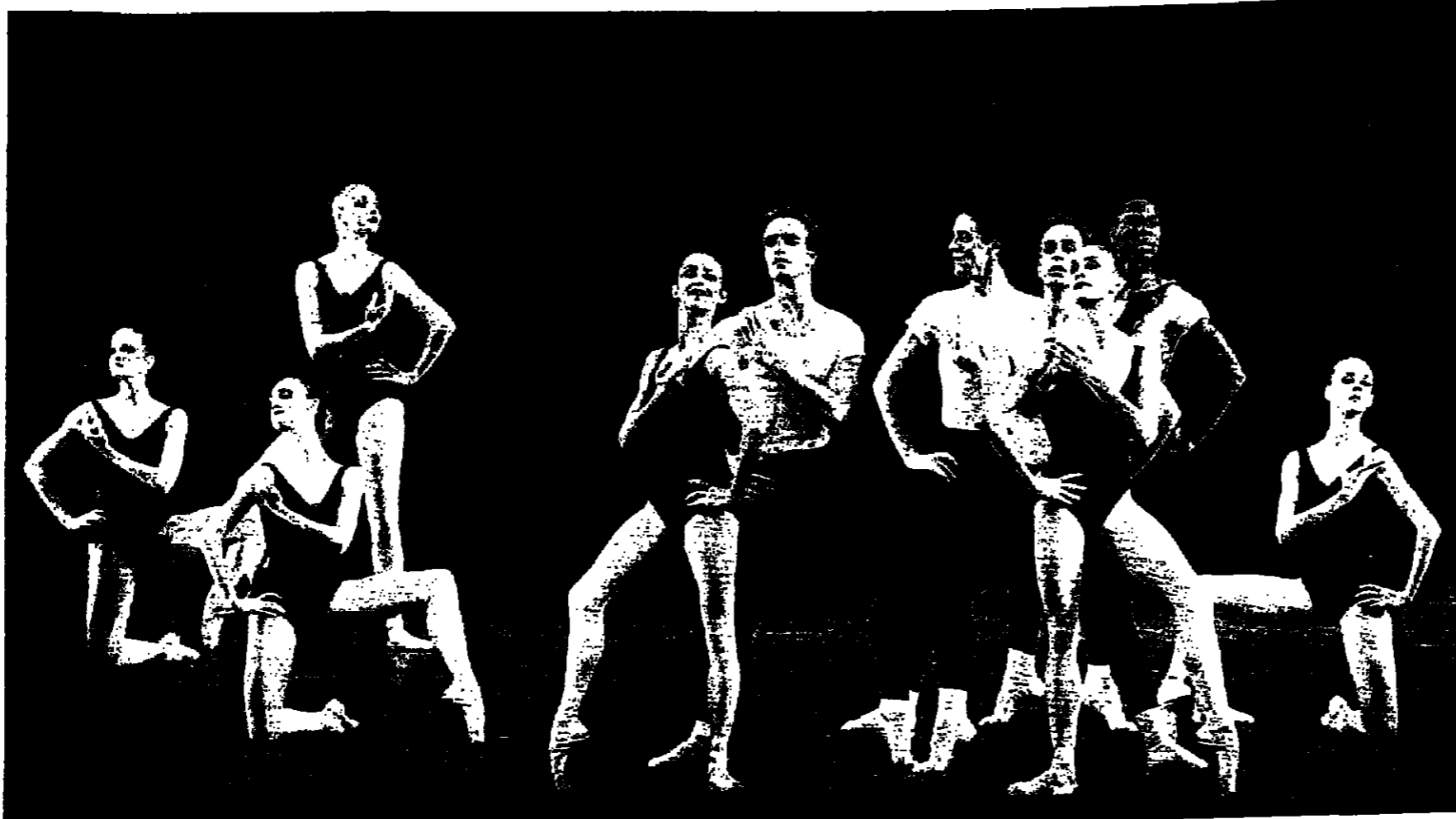
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GLOBAL ARTS '99

The big event of the dance year is the celebratory season by New York City Ballet to mark its golden jubilee. In 1948, George Balanchine and Lincoln Kirstein realised their dream of an ensemble dedicated to the idea of American classical ballet.



Expression of pride: the New York City Ballet performing Igor Stravinsky's Agon, choreographed by George Balanchine

Paul Kolnik

Ballet

An all-gold celebration

Writing about the early years (which I recall as one does the delights of first love) Kirstein observed: "Stability we had not, and would not have for another 20 years. In England, with the inestimable advantage of Lord Keynes' patronage...

Other New York events meriting attention are the late spring season by American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House from April 26 until mid-June, which will feature six full-length ballets and the company's acquisition of MacMillan's Anastasia.

There is a proposed summer visit by the Kirov Ballet, and a season by the life-enhancing Paul Taylor Company in early March at the City Center.

In Paris, the Opéra Ballet performs until July 15, at the Palais Garnier or the Bastille Opera House. Superlative dancing, interesting programmes which bring the classics, honoured modern masterpieces by Balanchine

and Robbins (in March), novelties (Angelin Preljocaj's Le Parc returns in April, and William Forsythe has a new piece for the company as part of an all-Forsythe evening, also April).

In May, the company will pay a one-week visit to Japan with Béjart's Ninth Symphony. In late June and July, Swan Lake and La Sylphide will play concurrently at the two theatres.

In the French regions, plenty of activity: Lyon offers eight ballets in new choreography; Nice will show Cranko's Onegin in May, and a new Carmine Burana by Yury Vámos at the Arènes de Cimiez in late June; in Bordeaux, where the eminent Charles Jude is now director, his staging of Coppélia will be seen in

June, and there are three evenings by young choreographers in May. Toulouse shows three programmes during the spring; the Ballet de Nancy mounts a Diaghilev homage in mid-April, and a new work by Roland Petit (June 24-29).

For the most adventurous modern dance, the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris has innovative programmes, and the admirable Maison de la Danse in Lyon plays host to 30 visitors, from ballet troupes to the wildest experimentalists.

There are productions of old favourites. For the Vienna State Ballet, Vladimir Malakhov stages La Bayadère in February, and Makarova's version of the same piece is in repertory at La Scala, Milan, at the same time. Milan brings back

Giselle in the beautiful old Alexandre Benois designs in May, presents Carla Fracci in evenings devoted to Ida Rubinstein (in the Teatro Studio in April), and hosts performances by the Tokyo

company's bright public image have won new audiences. Sunderland, once a notorious graveyard for ballet, has been won over cheap prices, skilled marketing fill the theatre for BRB.

English National Ballet also knows how to reach out to audiences. The company has two fixed points in its year: Christmas at the Coliseum and a summer blockbuster at the Royal Albert Hall. (This season it will be a revival of Swan Lake in the round). Spring will bring a split tour, with an approachable repertory on view in 12 regional theatres, and there follows a visit to Australia in May for 12 performances of Swan Lake in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Scottish Ballet makes a Spring tour to Glasgow, Aberdeen, Edinburgh with its fine La Sylphide and a triple bill which contains two as yet unannounced novelties. Northern Ballet Theatre will stage a new Carmen, choreography by Didi Veldman, in Leeds on February 22. Rambert Dance Company tours Britain and visits Austria in February and Italy in April, and has its Sadler's Wells season in May, when new works will include the bravura Golden Section by Twyla Tharp.

Among visitors to Sadler's Wells, Irek Mukhamedov appears in a new Don Juan by Kim Brandstrup for Arc Dance (opening at the Wells on March 1); Pina Bausch brings her Wuppertal Dance Theatre to the Wells at the end of January with Viktor, while Pacific Northwest Ballet (much admired at the Edinburgh Festival last summer) will bring two programmes during the week of February 22, including a happy staging of Balanchine's Midsummer Night's Dream, and the Norwegian National Ballet will appear at the Wells in November with Michael Corder's Romeo and Juliet.

In St. Petersburg, the Kirov Ballet is preparing a revision - in effect, a cleaning of the text - of Sleeping Beauty in early spring, and the company will visit Munich in March with three performances of Swan Lake and a Fokine evening during the Bavarian State Ballet's annual Festival Week. The Bavarian State Ballet will, as part of an interesting repertory, stage a new Emma B by Jean Grand-Maitre at the start of the ballet week on March 24.

The new year, as you may judge, promises to be busy. Lord Chesterfield, in one of those letters, observed that "dancing is a very trifling and silly thing". Well, up to a point, Lord Chesterfield.

Birmingham Royal Ballet knows exactly what it is going to do until next December. The company visits Sadler's Wells in February with David Bintley's Edward II and a triple bill including Ninette de Valois's joyous The Prospect Before Us. Twyla Tharp's In the Upper Room has been acquired, as has William Forsythe's Limb's Theorem, and the regular spring season in Birmingham will feature Coppélia and the company's collaborative production The Four Seasons. This will also be seen during BRB's week at the Coliseum in July, in tandem with Bintley's Carmine Burana.

In the autumn, a new Giselle will be produced by Bintley and Galina Samsova, and Bintley also stages a new Shakespeare Suite (Duke Ellington score) and acquires Balanchine's Slaughter on Tenth Avenue. The company will tour Britain where, be it noted, Bintley's policies and his

water with an important tour to the Far East in April and May, visiting Japan and China, and preceding this with a small split tour during early March to eight regional theatres with Dance Bites - creations by Michael Corder, Cathy Marston, Mark Baldwin and William Tuckett. Scheduled London appearances are for three weeks in July at Sadler's Wells, with new work by William Tuckett, and the happy return of Ashton's Ondine. What happens thereafter can probably best be divined by inspecting the entrails of a chicken.

Can British cinema revive? The question would have seemed redundant in 1997, when it rode so high that it was honoured with an entire tribute season at the Venice Film Festival. In 1998, though, it has threatened to collapse in the saddle. At press shows, a regular cue for silent panic has been to see the words "European Script Fund", "Arts Council" or "National Lottery" in the credits. They mean that an Anglo-inspired Euro-pudding is about to splatter the screen, or else that some auteurist British brainstorm, made at once bankable and artistically bankrupt by the presence of an American star plus mid-Atlantic plot compromises, will fret his hour upon the screen before vanishing into TV.

At least the cultural trade pattern is not all one way. We export talent as well as borrowing it. In 1999 Kenneth Branagh will be seen twice in major American films, bravely, nay, recklessly expanding his range. He plays a Woody Allen variant in the main role of the master's new comedy Celebrity, then a steam-driven android bent on assassinating the US President in The Wild Wild West from director Barry (Men In Black) Sonnenfeld. And although England's Terence Hattigan might turn in his grave at America's action-fantasy hijacking of his title The Deep Blue Sea - in the Hollywood genre genetically modified cyber-sharks attack Samuel Jackson - Scotland's

Cinema

Bugs and bard strut their stuff

Insects posing as film stars means the millennium must be treated seriously, says Nigel Andrews

The hero and main characters of the most successful film in America as I write are insects. We know that these creatures were taking over the world; it is a scientific fact that the next millennium will be celebrated by millipedes. But this is alarming.

Disney's digital animation feature A Bug's Life, opening in the new year in the UK, is following Antz into the minds, hearts and pockets of filmgoers. And, since any living organism can now be reproduced on film, voiced by famous actors and cranked by computer graphics (with an increasing input of famous-actor idiosyncrasy), how long before Tom Hanks lends his digitally-scanned essence to the role of a bacterium, or Jim Carrey to a wacky amino-acid?

Millennia are serious things: 1999 may be the last year in which normal plots with normal humans stalk the screen. So with almost tearful valedictory fondness we record that the old favourites will be back with us once more (at least, or in the case of Brad Pitt and Tom Cruise three more per movie brat. Pitt's 1999 repertoire ranges from Death in the Valley comedy Meet Joe Black) to General Custer, while Cruise's trio includes the long-awaited Kubrick thotic thriller Eyes Wide Shut co-starring his newly sensational other half Nicole Kidman. Another Bond film will arrive, directed by Michael Apted of TV's Screen 21 docu-series. And Pierce Brosnan himself, Mel Gibson and Samuel L. Jackson will each star in major new Hollywood thrillers.

It is typical of a fin de siècle, let alone de millennium, that humanity takes a last lingering look back before jumping into the unknown. Which explains why we are seeing Psycho again, in the bizarre-sounding shot-for-shot remake by Gus Good Will Hunting Van Sant; why the sequel/prequel industry is busy with Austin Powers 2, Mission: Impossible 2, Nutty Professor 2 and a film we must probably call Star Wars IV, since its action precedes not just the Luke Skywalker trilogy we know but two more prequels in the planning.

H apply for older moviemania, the 1999 boom offers more evocative, less grimly derivative plunderings. The rhapsodically reviewed Shakespeare In Love exhumes our beloved Bard in a Stoppard-scripted romance starring Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow, the American actress who seems to be playing all our British heroines (except for Elizabeth I, played by an Australian). Anthony Minghella's The Talented Mr Ripley resurrects Patricia Highsmith's great psychopath, who stalked through two previous Euro-gems, Clement's Purple Noon and Wenders' The American Friend. And the all-star war film The Thin Red Line re-animates the directing career of Terrence Malick, who vanished from our screens after Badlands and Days Of Heaven. In addition, Mighty Joe Young revisits a lovable monster classic first made in the shadow of King Kong. And Notting Hill essays the most serious resurrection of all. It puts

semi-extinct heartthrob Hugh Grant into a Richard Curtis script said to be not a million light years from Four Weddings And A Funeral.

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Imitating life: Gwyneth Paltrow and Joseph Fiennes in Shakespeare In Love

Ewan McGregor may enter the top-dollar stratosphere after playing the young Obi Wan Kenobi in the Star Wars prequel.

No preview of a year can be complete without listing oddities outside the mainstream. Will Roman Polanski restore his reputation with the demonic thriller The Ninth Gate, starring Johnny Depp? Will the writer of Seven, Andrew Kevin Walker, confirm his macabre talent with two new scripts: Smm, in which Nicolas Cage prowls the world of snuff film; and Sleepy Hollow, with director Tim Burton tackling

the "headless horseman" fable? What of Britain's Hideous Kinky, the promisingly buzzed new outing for Kate Winslet? And whatever will Magnolia be like? The new film from Paul Thomas Anderson of the porn opera Boogie Nights features several of that movie's players, plus guest star Tom Cruise.

We almost forgot the rest of the world. But then distributors are forgetting it too. We badly need more arthouse in the west, while saving the precious few that are left. Humanity cannot live on Hollywood alone, nor even on Pinewood. So we

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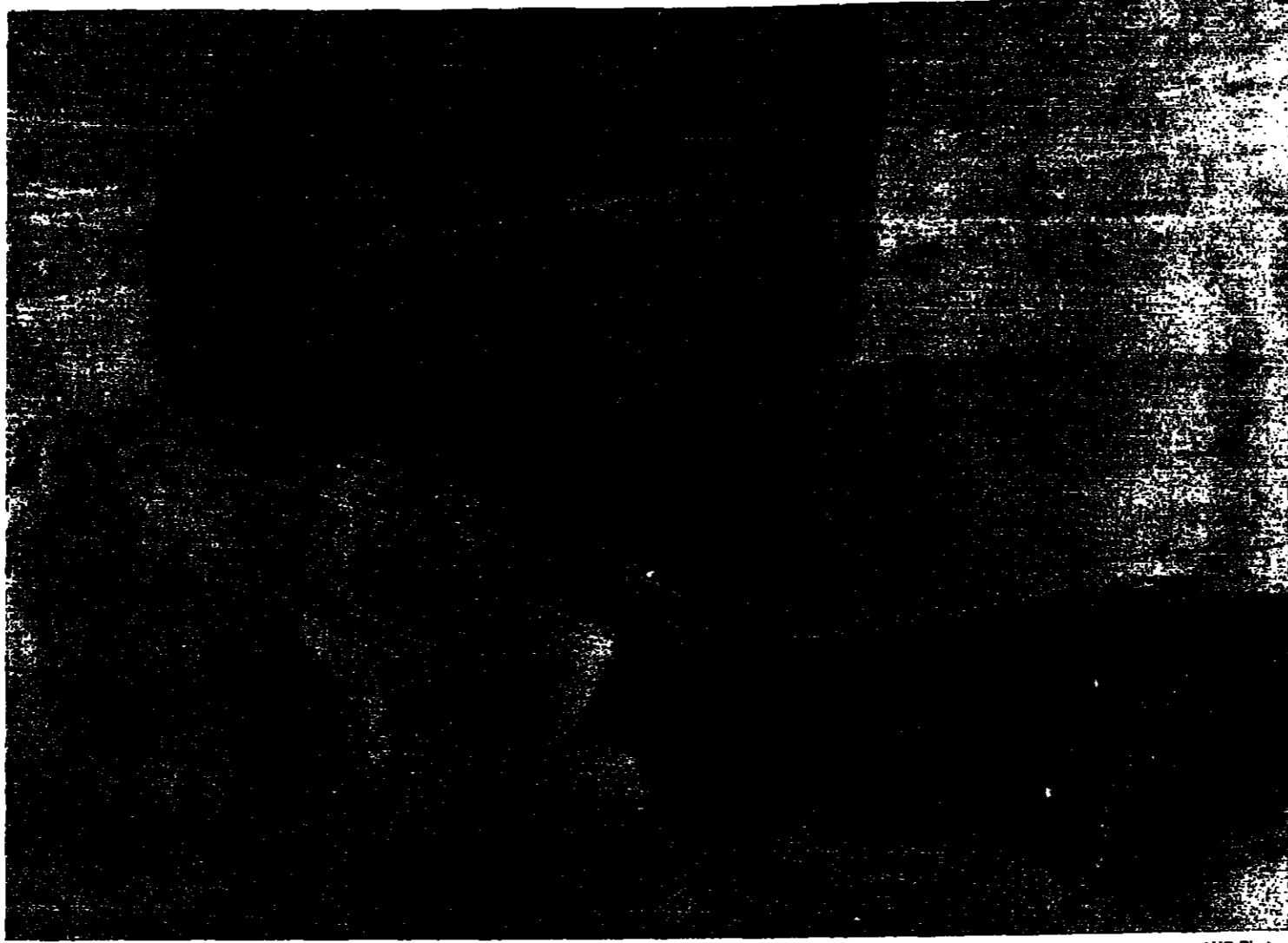
GLOBAL ARTS '99

City of Culture

City with an eye on the past and the future

Weimar is more than a series of museum pieces - it is the emblem of the resurgence of eastern Europe, says Jackie Wullschlager

To foreigners, it is the name of the wobbly democracy that gave way to Hitler, it conjures up husky decadence, the world of Lotte Lenya or Cabaret. To designers it is the birthplace of Bauhaus; to musicians the city of Bach and Liszt; to art historians that of Lucas Cranach and the glory of Reformation painting. But to everyday Germans Weimar will always resonate as the home of Goethe and Schiller, cradle of German classicism. In the 19th century, before Germany was even unified, it was the unofficial cultural capital, a vital stop on the Grand Tour at a time when Berlin barely featured on the map. Thackeray satirised the town's Hotel Elephant in Vanity Fair, and Hans Christian Andersen on his tour across Europe wrote that as he drove "over the bridge and past the mill, and for the last time looked back to the city and the castle, a deep melancholy took hold of my soul... I thought my journey, after I had left Weimar, could afford no more pleasure". A century later, Hitler built Buchenwald concentration camp down the road, and after the war the town slipped into decay under east German rule. This year Weimar, the tiny city nestling in the Thuringian hills which was forgotten by the world for 40 years, is coming to life again like Sleeping Beauty's castle. To celebrate a crowd of anniversaries in 1999 - Goethe's 250th birthday and Schiller's 240th, 80 years since the beginnings of Bauhaus and since the Weimar government held its first session in Goethe's theatre, and 10 years since German unification - it is European City of Culture for 1999, the smallest city ever chosen and the first from the former eastern European states. Can it shape up as a mecca for international culture, and what are the local ingredients it can offer the global arts traveller? In this pre-millennial year, it is selling itself as a town uniquely placed to mix retrospection with an eye on the future. From few networks of streets in Europe does his-



The philosopher Nietzsche on his sick bed, Villa Silberblick, Weimar 1890, by Hans Olds

AKG Photo

story speak so loud as from Weimar's Altstadt (old town). Within minutes you can stroll from Goethe's and Schiller's houses on the Frauenplan to the quirky, delightful Hotel Elephant, which has played host to guests from Bach and Tolstoy to Gorbachev and Chirac; from Goethe's *Sturm und Drang* at the old cafe Zum Weissen Schwan ("At the White Swan") to the Bauhaus Museum, home of the early works of Kandinsky, Klee and Walter Gropius, or from the pink and gold town church on Herderplatz which houses Cranach's famous Protestant Crucifixion altarpiece to the cluster of rococo palaces and classical facades, where the art-obsessed dukes of Weimar held their "muses court". Through the woods from one of them, Duchess Anna Amalia's Eitersburg Castle, a short path leads to Buchenwald, where prisoners in the camp had to make replicas of the furniture in Schiller's study and build the crates in which the books from Weimar's classical libraries were moved out of bombing range. Buchenwald will forever cast its gloom on the city; nowhere in Germany is the question of how high culture yielded to barbarism more insistently present than here. Yet Weimar is not just a series of museum pieces. Today it is an emblem of the resurgence of eastern Europe; it is still hardly a capitalist success story, and there remains in some quarters nostalgia for the security of the old regime, but the town's liberal humanist traditions naturally ally it to the west, and money is pouring in to renovate public buildings and restore its grand parks and riverways. The French conceptual artist Daniel Buren is redesigning the Rollplatz square, one of the oldest in the city, with something like the audacity of Paris's Louvre; white and coloured stripes on steele and quadrants rise and slope to and from the centre, creating a striking display of coloured surfaces. The State Museum, neglected after 1945, reopens this month as a gallery for contemporary art. Goethe's renovated court theatre, built in 1791, opens in February with Alexander Lang's production of *Faust* - one of the highlights of European theatre in 1999. *Faust*, the man who bargained his soul to the devil and travelled "from heaven through the world to hell", towers over the year's cultural programme. All 47 films ever made of *Faust* will be shown; Immanuel Iv's *Mephisto* (February) and Michael Simon's *Urfaust* (February) from New York are dance versions of Goethe's play; in a co-production with the Berlin Schaubühne feminist director Edith Clever retells the story as *Goethe's Women* (August-September) and one of the musical highlights is a production of Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust* (March). Otherwise, the excitement of the theatre programme is its tendency to look east.

Among Weimar's coups are co-productions with the Georgian director Reso Gabriadze of *Pushkin's Journeys* (June), celebrating the Russian poet's bicentenary. It continues with Daniel Barenboim and A German Requiem (April) -

programme, opening this month with Sir Neville Martin conducting Haydn's *The Creation*, also celebrating its bicentenary. It continues with Daniel Barenboim and A German Requiem (April) -

Brahms was an enemy of Weimar ("I realised soon enough that I didn't fit in there. I would have had to be") - followed by the Kirov Opera and Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts* (June); a landmark production of Mahler's *Resurrection* symphony (August), in which Jewish and German musicians come together on German soil for the first time when Zubin Mehta conducts

the Israel Philharmonic and the Bavarian State Orchestra; and culminates with John Eliot Gardiner beginning in Weimar his project to record The Christmas Oratorio and all Bach's cantatas at historical sites for Bach Year 2000 (December). Weimar cannot help itself: it is nothing if not lofty and highbrow. You can eat and drink well - heavy, spicy meats, *Kaffee und Kuchen*, local fruity wines - but this is not a sybarite's venue. Even the restaurants, the black and silver art deco Amalia in the Hotel Elephant and the Bauhaus, Wolf's Art Hotel, are mostly famous for art.

In the cemetery grand dukes and poets lie side by side and, like any city that has built itself on culture, Weimar is intensely self-questioning. Its exhibition programme begins with a massive historical show about the first German Republic, "The Path to Weimar" (from February), and a sculpture show, "The Naked Napoleon" (January-March) about art, idols and forgery. "The Rise and Fall of Modernism, 1890-1990" (May-August) is the story of the avant-garde versus the conservative in German art, complemented by a dazzling programme of music banned by Hitler, "Degenerate Music 1938" (May-August), and by the controversial "The GDR Art Scene 1945-1990" (September-December). It ends with an English curator's attempt to answer the question Weimar believes will still obsess its visitors in 1999: Henry Meyrick Hughes' exhibition (September-December) "Who's Afraid of Black, Red and Gold?"

Anniversaries

The great survivors

The coming year offers plenty of composers' anniversaries, as every year does. But there is an odd, thought-provoking pair of them this time: just 50 years past, on September 8, Richard Strauss died; while Francis Poulenc was born on January 7 a whole century ago.

That sounds the wrong way round, somehow. Most of us think of Strauss as a 19th-century Romantic, brilliantly "radical" in his early career, who soon found himself entrenched as a paid-up conservative while he lived on and on outliving both Berg and Webern, although he died two years before Schoenberg did.

By contrast, Poulenc has always typified the brittle 1920s: sharp, witty, knowing, shameless about popular appeal, decidedly short-breathed though acutely aware of new musical developments around him, and no less critically aware of how much he could do within the special limits of his compositional range.

What links Strauss and Poulenc is that, long since, they have both been judged "reactionary" composers - creatures dislocated from their Modernist times, almost 20th-century dinosaurs; yet they have never fallen out of fashion. No other turn-of-the-century German or Austrian composer has steadily survived like Strauss; nor has any other member of the snook-clubbing "Les Six" group but Poulenc. Honnegger and Milhaud still lurk among the descending shadows, but Auric, Durey and Tailleferre have dwindled to historical wraiths.

proper due, and he could have counted on it had the second world war not intervened. Most of us Straussians know the recording of the Salzburg dress rehearsal, the *Generalprobe*, which was as far as the splendid original cast for *Danae* went. The Allied forces were coming too close, so the "first night" was cancelled. After the war, *Danae* got lost; Strauss's interest in it had cooled, and besides he had gone on - to his own surprise - to write *Capriccio*, a mere "conversation-piece for music", which is now heard the world over. In Britain, the half-century of Strauss's death will be marked by a *Danae* production (almost a contradiction in terms) at the plucky little Garsington Festival next summer, if their fractious neighbours permit. It will nevertheless be the first British staging, and tickets will soon be impossible to find. You have been warned.

Poulenc's centenary is more awkward. The glories of his quirky, irresistibly appealing oeuvre are, first, the chamber music, which has been constantly played

and therefore allowing himself an unrestricted canvas: large orchestra, an extravagant roster of principals (all of whom must really be able to sing) and a great spread of luxurious sets. At 76, he thought that no less than his

these many years (the three late wind sonatas are incomparable); second, the brilliantly fluent piano music, which is not neglected; third, the popular "sacred" pieces (especially his *Gloria* and *Stabat Mater*); and finally his wonderful songs - loads of them, though fully accessible only to people with decent French.

Poulenc loved the contemporary "Surrealists" above all; although in his music they are made to sing superbly, they resist translation. The Wigmore Hall concert that marked his exact centenary last week sold out months in advance. But there are other celebratory recitals on the agenda. His one, poignant, full-scale opera, *Dialogues des Carmélites*, is being revived all over Europe, but not in the UK. Nor is his vaudeville-opera *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, which I think his most individual, definitive work, along with the delectable two-piano concerto from 1922.

And what about the purely orchestral music, and the ballets? I've never heard *Les Animaux modèles* played live in London, though its "Dawn" prologue is unfortunately affecting even beyond its obvious model, Ravel's "Lever du jour" in *Daphnis*. Never mind; Poulenc seems to be always with us. Infinitely sophisticated on the margins, wry, mocking, wittily concise; and on occasion, without disguise, sentimental beyond what any other decent 20th-century composer would risk. We need to keep him around.

The missing factor has been *Die Liebe der Danae*, the "cheerful mythology" that Strauss composed as his grand operatic swansong,

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Strauss at London's Theatre Royal, Drury Lane in 1947, during a festival in his honour

Hulton Getty

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